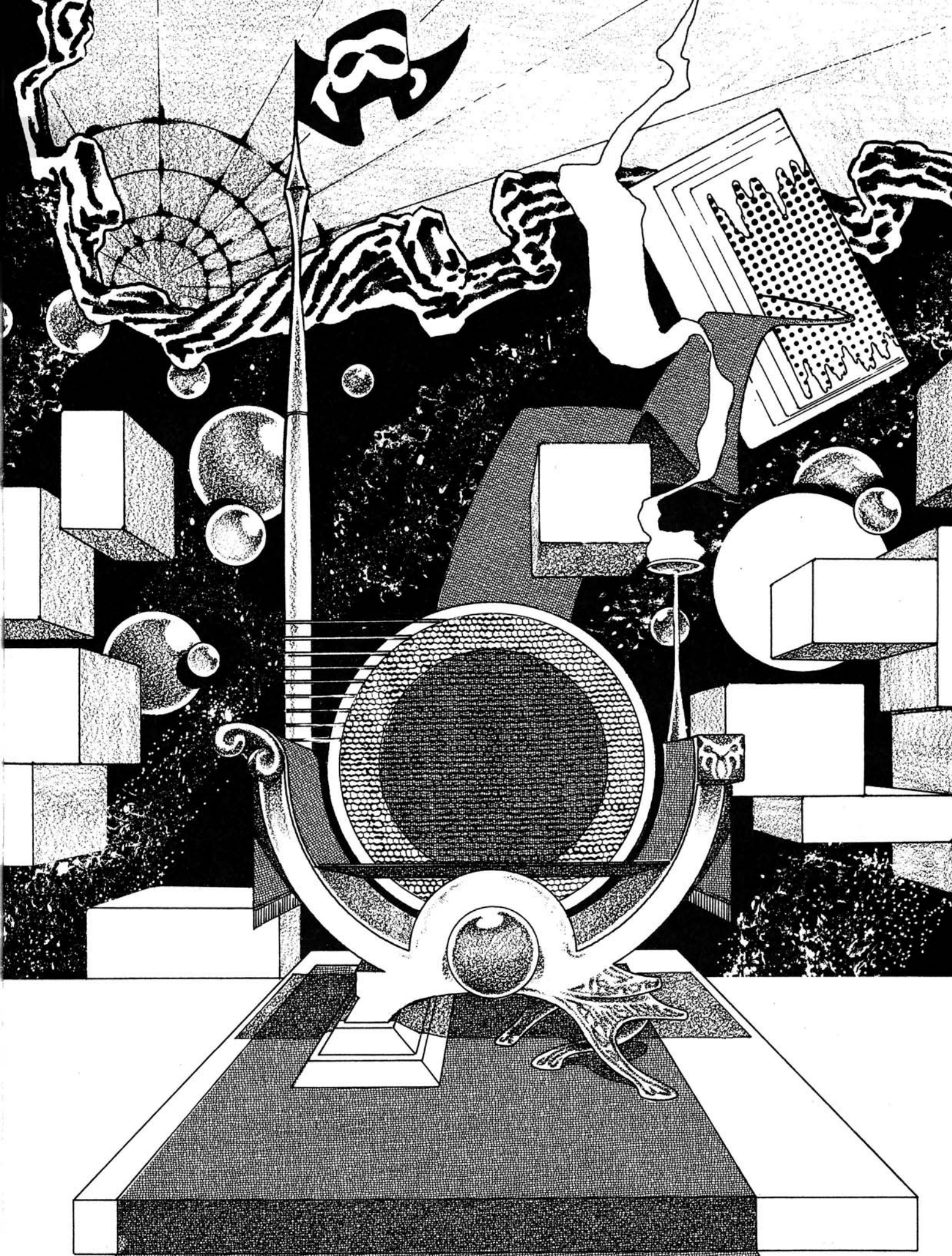


Shadow Knight

Supplemental Rules & Background for
AMBER DICELESS ROLE-PLAYING





Thinking of writing to Phage Press?

Please do!

We still love getting mail. Especially mail with large checks in them, but any kind of mail will do. If you write to us we will put you on our mailing list so that you may receive notice of our upcoming books, about the yearly (since 1989!) AMBERCON role-playing convention. Plus details on T-Shirts and other neat things.

Just a postcard puts you in touch.

We are also very, very, very good at responding to our mail. We pride ourselves upon it.

We are, however, weak in two very human ways.

First, we are sometimes slow. Sometimes we are slow because a piece of mail loses itself in a stack of the wrong stuff.

We are also slow when we receive letters filled with intelligent, perceptive and insightful questions. Then we have to actually *think* about how we might respond. Large numbers of intelligent, perceptive and insightful questions in a single letter cause us great consternation, and send us into such flurries of concentration as takes us near forever to actually respond. If there were but one intelligent, perceptive and etc. question in a single letter then we might have a somewhat quicker burst of insight.

Another weakness we have is that we are customers of a rather large organization, the Post Office. This institution is known for its amazing timeliness and accuracy. Most of our mail is delivered promptly, accurately, and with great pleasantness.

However, we daily return to our Postmistress items destined for other parties. Sometimes an item appears in the wrong zip code area, or the zip is right but the person is one unknown to us. We also receive the occasional letter intended for Nigeria. Upon these occasions we wonder if somewhere, some lonesome piece of mail intended for us, has found itself elsewhere (in Nigeria?).

And so, if you have not heard from us in some unreasonable length of time, please try again. Thank you.



Yes, AMBERZINE is a "fanzine." It's by and for people who are fanatics about AMBER and AMBER DICELESS ROLE-PLAYING. But it doesn't look like a fanzine. It looks like a cross between an academic journal and a fancy trade paperback. Inside the sturdy pearly gray covers (you know Corwin would approve) you'll find each 6" by 9" issue Amberzine is packed with at least 160 pages of great Amber stuff.

Forget about finding AMBERZINE at your local store. We're allowed to print just 1,000 copies of each issue, so it's sold only by mail. Sample issues are \$10 each, and a subscription is \$40 for five issues.

For a limited time back issues #1-#5 are available as a set, shipped Air Mail or First Class, anywhere in the world, for just \$50. That's 832 pages, or three and half times the size of this book! Included are Zelazny's "Prolog" to *Trumps of Doom* (previously available only in the boxed edition), questions and answers about diceless role-playing, classified ads, cartoons, poetry, regular columns, and lots and lots of accounts of role-playing sessions. There are also informative articles about Zelazny's Amber, including a regular feature from Zelazny's literary biographer, Jane Lindskold.

Just to pick one nifty thing. Issue #5 featured a reprint of the 1946 novel by Henry Kuttner, *The Dark World*, with commentary by Ray Bradbury, Roger Zelazny, and others. Why? Well, (1) it was Roger Zelazny's favorite fantasy book when he was a kid, (2) the main character is named Ganelon, (3) the parallels with Amber are fascinating, and (4) it's a good book that's been out-of-print way too long.

For our overseas friends, there is no extra charge for foreign sales or shipping, but payment must be in U.S. funds, either by a postal money order, or a check drawn on a U.S. bank please.

Let's see, wasn't there something else I was supposed to mention?

Oh yeah!

Here in this book you'll notice references to something called "The Salesman's Tale." That's Roger Zelazny's new Amber short story. Unpublished as yet, but coming in Amberzine #6, March of 1994...

SHADOW KNIGHT

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BASED ON TRUMPS OF DOOM, BLOOD OF AMBER, SIGN OF CHAOS,
KNIGHT OF SHADOWS & PRINCE OF CHAOS,
ALL NOVELS OF THE AMBER™ UNIVERSE, BY
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Sorry.

I've caused a lot of grief to thousands of *Amber* fans, patiently, or not so patiently, waiting for this book.

More grief was visited on hapless retailers, for whom grief was visited time after time by fans asking both "Is it in yet?" and "Why not?"

Which, in turn, led to grief on the part of the distributors, the intermediaries between the stores and Phage Press.

So the folks at Phage Press, Lisa & Ron Seymour, were subjected to far more than their share of the grief, as they shielded me from all the angry distributors.

Then there's the grief I laid on the writers. Cathy Klessig, Jason Durall and Joe Saul each had to put up with a lot from a cranky perfectionist (me)...

Kevin Siembieda (of Palladium Books) put up with another portion of grief when his ace writer (me), kept putting off doing other books because this one took near forever.

Most grievous grief was visited upon my friends and family, as I absented myself from their company overmuch.

Finally, worst of all, the grief I caused Kate is just too much.

Mea culpa, all, mea maxima culpa.

Anyway, this book is dedicated to all those who suffered waiting for it...

First Printing ~ December, 1993

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INTRODUCTION

This was a tough book to do.

I have this vision of the first five books of the *Chronicles of Amber* as being the true core of Amber. What Corwin encounters becomes part of the canon, and we take that as a basis for all subsequent campaigns.

The second five books, which we'll be calling the Merlin Saga, I see in a different light. We see through the eyes of Merlin, a very different character than Corwin.

Where Corwin is archetype, Merlin is template for the youth of another generation.

In role-playing terms, for me, Merlin is a player character.

I can't help but view Roger Zelazny as Merlin's Game Master, and the Merlin Saga as one character's version, or diary, of Zelazny's campaign.

Which is where it gets tricky.

Since we only have Merlin's word for what is going on, we're trying to construct a campaign book based on a rather limited point of view. That makes describing the background of the story rough.

You might ask, why can't I just ask Zelazny?

Because the campaign isn't finished. As a Game Master, Zelazny has too many stories yet to tell, too many plots yet to reveal, and too many things in mind for his characters to discover. Besides, Merlin, Luke, and Julia are too prone to visiting our Shadow Earth, and we wouldn't want to spoil their fun...

And, if we knew the exact answers, it would also spoil the fun for a lot of other Amber Game Masters.

So there are things we don't know.

For example, which of the characters encountered by Merlin are player characters and which are Non-Player Characters (NPCs)? Merlin and Luke are clearly player characters. Also, in all probability, Julia and Jurt (surely

Zelazny-the-Game-Master wouldn't treat a hapless NPC so badly?) are player characters. On the other hand, Dara and Jasra, Delwin and Suhuy, are more likely to be NPCs. Which leaves us kind of confused about Mandor, and Dalt, and even Nayda-as-Ty'iga...

What are the new things? Is Ghostwheel an Artifact? A Creature? A new character? A new god-like power? Maybe Ghostwheel is something new, something invented for this rule book, something we'll call a Construct.

How about Broken Pattern? I decided to treat it as a new power, one available to player characters and NPCs, and listed on the new character sheet. Frankly, I'm still not too sure about the decision.

I weaseled out of defining any of the other stuff as powers. When it comes to bathing in the Fount of Power, attuning to the Tragoliths (Luke's Blue Stones), or using spikards, there are only present possibilities, not rules. Are they new powers? Items? Constructs?

Only one person can really answer these questions.

No, it's not Roger Zelazny. And it's sure not me.

Since the answers have to be unique for each campaign, the only person with the answers is the Game Master. You, if you choose to run a campaign.

Or, if you've already got a campaign started, use what you want. You don't have to modify your rules, or change anything at all.

A campaign where players can add Broken Pattern to the list of possible character powers, and can also spend points on Constructs as well as Artifacts and Creatures. A campaign where some old problems are answered, but where there are many new mysteries, and a whole bunch of neat new characters to serve as parents and siblings, accomplices and adversaries.

GLOSSARY

OF SHADOW KNIGHT TERMS & CONCEPTS

The Black Zone.

We were together in a wood within the Black Zone, that area of Shadow with which Chaos holds commerce. We were hunting zhind, which are horned, short, black, fierce and carnivorous...

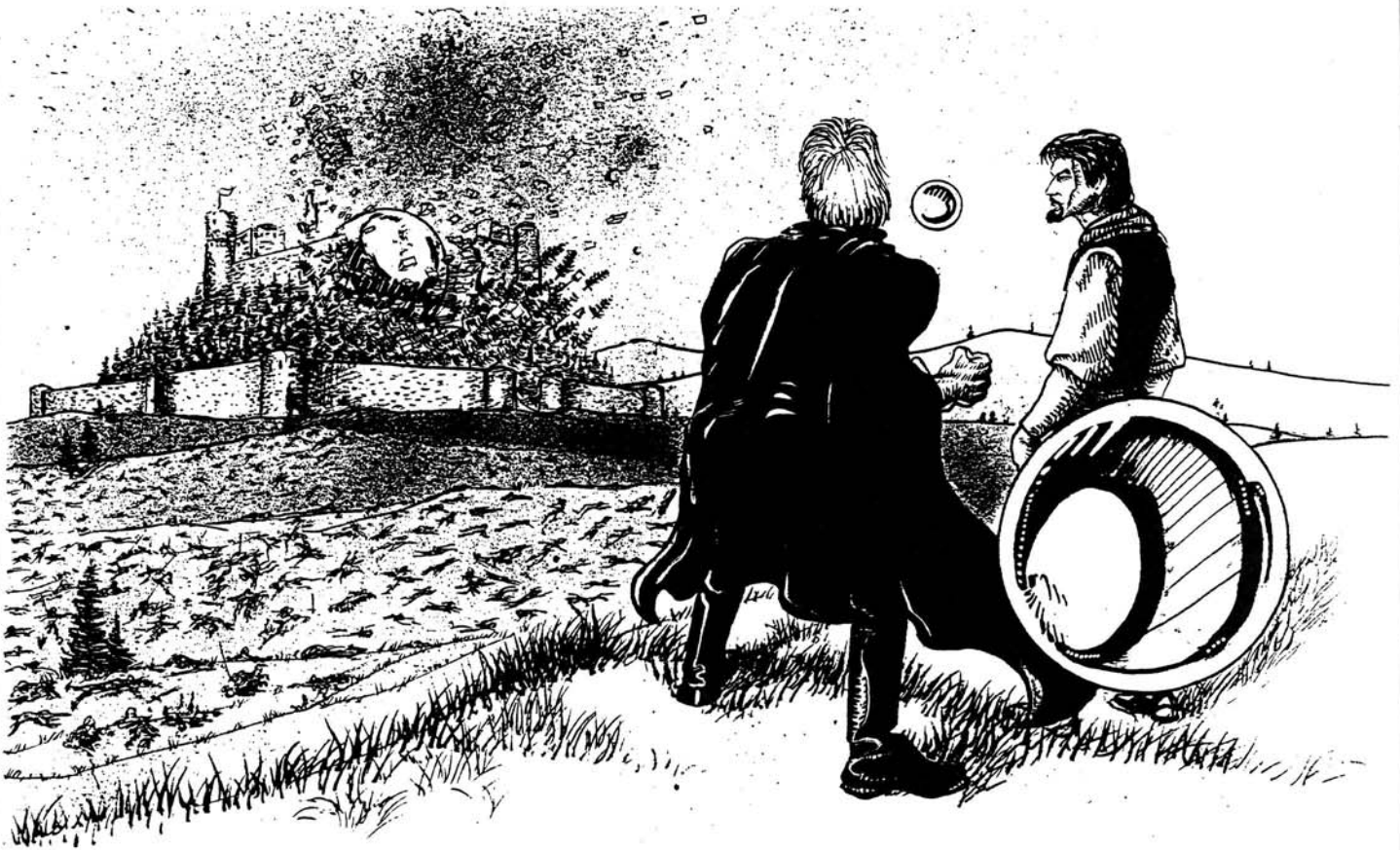
Blood of Amber

The Courts of Chaos has its favorites among the surrounding Shadows. Within the Black Zone are trading partners, potential fiefdoms, and the raw manpower needed to form armies. In addition, just as Amber has its Forest Arden, there are sufficient wilderness areas in the Black Zone for all the Lords of Chaos to have their own private hunting preserves.

Broken Patterns.

Scattered throughout Shadow, like reflections in a cracked mirror, are images of the Pattern. Each Shadow copy is imperfect, weakened by fractures and gaps. Some are located in Shadowy imitations of Castle Amber, others in reflections of Tir-na Nog'th or Rebma, and others appear in the open air, like the Primal Pattern. The farther away from Amber, the worse the image, until there are places where fragments of Pattern give off only a dim glimmer.

Even though the Broken Patterns have just a bit of the power of the original, they are often a magnet for power hungry wizards and other creatures capable of moving through Shadow. It's even possible to walk a Broken Pattern, through the fissures rather than along the lines, and thereby gain a certain amount of power over Shadow.



Constructs.

Built on special Shadows, empowered or conjured to a kind of life, Constructs are experiments in power. Like Merlin's Ghostwheel, each Construct has the potential to become a source of power, or a power in itself. Each Construct is also vulnerable, since elder Amberites, and Lords of Chaos, have the means to destroy the Shadow realms that power them.

The Corridor of Mirrors.

I had walked the Corridor of Mirrors on several occasions, sniffing the perfumes of scented candles, sometimes feeling subliminal presences among the images, things which faded at an instant's sharp regard. I had felt the mixed enchantments of the place but had somehow never roused its sleeping genii. Just as well perhaps. One never knew what to expect in that place; at least that's what Bleys once told me. He was not certain whether the mirrors propelled one into obscure realms of Shadow, hypnotized one and induced bizarre dream states, cast one into purely symbolic realms decorated with the furniture of the psyche, played malicious or harmless head games with the viewer, none of the above, all of the above, or some of the above. Whatever, it was something less than harmless, though, as thieves, servants, and visitors had occasionally been found dead or stunned and mumbling along that sparkling route, oftentimes wearing highly unusual expressions. And generally around the solstices and equinoxes—though it could occur at any season—the corridor moved itself to a new location, sometimes simply departing altogether for a time. Usually it was treated with suspicion, shunned, though it could as often reward as injure one or offer a useful omen or insight as readily as an unnerving experience. It was the uncertainty of it that roused trepidations.

And sometimes, I was told, it was almost as if it came looking for a particular person, bearing its ambiguous gifts. On such occasions it was said to be more dangerous to turn it down than to accept its invitation.

Knight of Shadows

A piece of wandering architecture usually found in Castle Amber, but also appearing as far away as the Courts of Chaos. The mirrors are sometimes windows into other places, sometimes a means of communication with characters, living and dead. It's a place of omens, and visions, and it can even appear, in very solid form, inside a character's dreams.

Corwin's Pattern.

At the end of the Patternfall War, that great conflict between Amber and the Courts of Chaos, Prince Corwin used the Jewel of Judgement to inscribe a new Pattern. It seems to represent a new universe of Shadows, and of possibilities, while it stands as a third power between Primal Pattern and the Logrus. By the end of the Merlin Saga, Corwin's Pattern had gained several powerful defenders.

Demons.

...a flood of childhood memories returned to me. Gryll was immensely strong, as are most demons. But I recalled our games, at Pit's-edge and out over the darkness, in burial chambers, caves, still-smoking battlefields, ruined temples, chambers of dead sorcerers, private hells. I always seemed to have more fun playing with demons than with my mother's relatives by blood or marriage. I even based my main Chaos form upon one of their kind.

Prince of Chaos

Fanged and scaled, often horned and taloned, demons seem to be the earliest inhabitants of the realm of Chaos. Some, indeed, are even said to be fragments of Primal Chaos. They range in size from small, furry, mouse catchers, all the way up to gigantic man-killers. Some dwell in ordinary material bodies, some are completely etherial and capable of inhabiting other bodies. Still other demons live in multi-dimensional realms where the usual rules of geometry don't apply.

To Lords of Chaos, who can take many forms, the shape of a demon is just as natural as that of a human. For example, at a State Funeral in the Courts of Chaos, it is traditional to wear red and come in the form of a demon.

The Eye of the Serpent.

"The Jewel of Judgment and the Eye of Chaos or Eye of the Serpent are different names for the same stone?" I said.

"Yes," Dworkin replied.

"What happens if the Serpent gets its eye back?" I inquired.

"The universe will probably come to an end."

"Oh," I observed.

Knight of Shadows

...and that's about the size of it...

The Fount of Power.

At the Keep of the Four Worlds, a nexus for Shadows of fire, water, air and earth, the energies of the Shadows flow in fires of a magical fountain. It was here that Prince Brand of Amber gained his power as a "Living Trump," by bathing in the Fount.

Ghosts.

Know the old tale about your whole life flashing in front of you? Anyone walking the Pattern will go through a similar experience, remembering and reliving their entire life.

It turns out this isn't just a casual bit of reminiscing. When someone walks the Pattern, the Pattern records the experience, effectively "downloading" the character's personality and memory. Once recorded, the Pattern can then create a copy of the original, a structure of pure Pattern energy with all the thoughts and feelings of the original. And, just as the Pattern can make Pattern-Ghosts, so the Logrus can put together Logrus-Ghosts.

The Golden Circle.

"...I want that Golden Circle Treaty with Amber..."

Luke, in Prince of Chaos

The Kingdom of Amber has created its own political alliance, called the Golden Circle. While most Golden Circle Shadows are relatively close to Amber, membership is more a matter of compact than geography. Each Golden Circle member state has a separate treaty with Amber, usually granting Amber's protection, and allowing privileged trade

status. On the other hand, any Golden Circle member must allow for the passage of Amber's fleets and/or troops, and may be required to contribute taxes or forces.

Lords of Chaos.

The Lords of Chaos are ranked according to Noble Houses, and their position within their House. The system seems to be patrilineal, so that children are raised in their father's House, and women move into the House of their husband when they marry.

House residences are called Ways, and are woven out of bits of Shadow into complex homes. For example, House Sawall's residence is Sawallways (or the Ways of Sawall), which includes the main Way of Suhuy itself, the Ways of Suhuy, at least eight byways, a maze of ways that contains Sawall's art collection, plus any number of hidden or secret ways. House members need not live in the Ways of the House. For example, Mandor, heir to House Sawall, maintains his own separate Mandorways.

The Pit.

...for a time, I simply stood outside the doors of frozen flame, there at the great Cathedral of the Serpent at the outer edge of the Plaza at the End of the World, situated exactly at the Rim, opened to the Pit itself—where, on a good day, one can view the creation of the universe, or its ending—and I watched the stars swarm through space that folded and unfolded like the petals of flowers...

Prince of Chaos

The Courts of Chaos floats above the void, and the bordering edge is called the Rim. The upper reaches of the Abyss, the region nearest the Courts of Chaos, are called the Pit, while the lowest portion is known as the Abyss.

The Serpent of Chaos.

The one-eyed Serpent of Chaos represents the Logrus, and the forces of Chaos. Just as the Unicorn represents the main religion of Amber, so the Way of the Serpent is the faith of the Courts of Chaos. The church is based on the Book of the Serpent Hung upon the Tree of Matter, and is headed by Lord Bances of Amblerash, High Priest of the Serpent Which Manifests the Logrus.

Shadowmastery.

He turned and walked toward the far wall. I followed him. There were no doors in the room, and he had to know all the local Shadow stress points, the Courts being opposite to Amber in this regard. While it's awfully hard to pass through Shadow in Amber, the shadows are like frayed curtains in the Courts—often, you can look right through into another reality without even trying. And, sometimes, something in the other reality may be looking at you. Care must be taken, too, not to step through into a place where you will find yourself in the middle of the air, underwater, or in the path of a raging beast. The Courts were never big on tourism.

Fortunately, the stuff of Shadow is so docile at this end of reality that it can be easily manipulated by a shadowmaster—who can stitch together their fabrics to create a way. Shadowmasters are technicians of locally potent skill, whose ability derives from the Logrus, though they need not be initiates. Very few are, although all initiates are automatically members of the Shadowmaster Guild. They're like plumbers or electricians about the Courts, and their skills vary as much as their counterparts on the Shadow Earth—a combination of aptitude and experience. While I'm a guild member I'd much rather follow someone who knows the ways than feel them out for myself. I suppose I should say more about this matter. Maybe I will sometime...

Prince of Chaos

Shadowmastery is a skill rather than a power. Anyone with the time and inclination—which would include all those who know how to manipulate Shadow—can learn the tricks. Shadowmastery is only useful in those places where Shadow is easy to manipulate, as in the Courts of Chaos. As to the drawbacks of Shadowmastery, consider the following:

"There's a way up there," I said.

"Yess. I was coiled about a branch of the blue tree when a shadowmaster opened it. They sslew him afterwardss."

Prince of Chaos

Spikards.

...The band was wide, possibly of platinum. It bore a wheel-like device of some reddish metal, with countless tiny spokes, many of them hair-fine. And each of these spokes extended a line of power leading off somewhere, quite possibly into Shadow, where some power cache or spell source lay...

Knight of Shadows

Ancient artifacts, from a period that may predate Amber itself. In the form of a ring, a spikard is capable of assembling spells nearly instantly, drawing on a vast number of sources of power off in Shadow. It's also hinted that Corwin's sword, Grayswandir, and possibly Brand's sword Werewindle, are of the same class of objects as spikards.

Suhuy.

"...I've no idea what may come of this. Only Dworkin could say. Be he sane, there is a reason for it. I acknowledge his mastery, though I've never been able to anticipate him."

"You know him, personally?" I asked.

"I knew him," he said, "long ago, before his troubles..."

Suhuy & Merlin, in Prince of Chaos

Suhuy is the ancient Keeper of the Logrus, and the chief mage of the Courts of Chaos. He is the principal teacher of Logrus, Trump and Magic.

Swayvill.

...I was able to get a few glimpses of the wasted demonic form of old Swayvill, resplendently garbed, serpent of red gold laid upon his breast, there in the flame-formed coffin, Oberon's ancient nemesis, going to join him at last.

Prince of Chaos



Until his recent death, King Swayvill was ruler of the Courts of Chaos, the counterpart to Amber's King Oberon. In fact, the death of Oberon may have directly caused Swayvill's death, such is the similarity of their roles, at the opposite ends of matter.

Tragoliths.

A family secret, held by Luke and his mother Jasra, is a Shadow containing a cave made of blue crystal. The crystal serves as a barrier to Pattern, Logrus, Trump and Magic, therefore making it an ideal refuge—or prison. Chunks of the cave are blue stones called Tragoliths. While impenetrable to other energies, they are linked with a power of their own, so each and every piece of the cave is linked all across Shadow. In addition, those who carry Tragoliths for a time will eventually become part of the linkage, so that they can be tracked through Shadow by any other Tragolith.

Undersadow.

I thought about that trek through the Undersadow, mixing menace with ghosts—Pattern, Logrus or both.

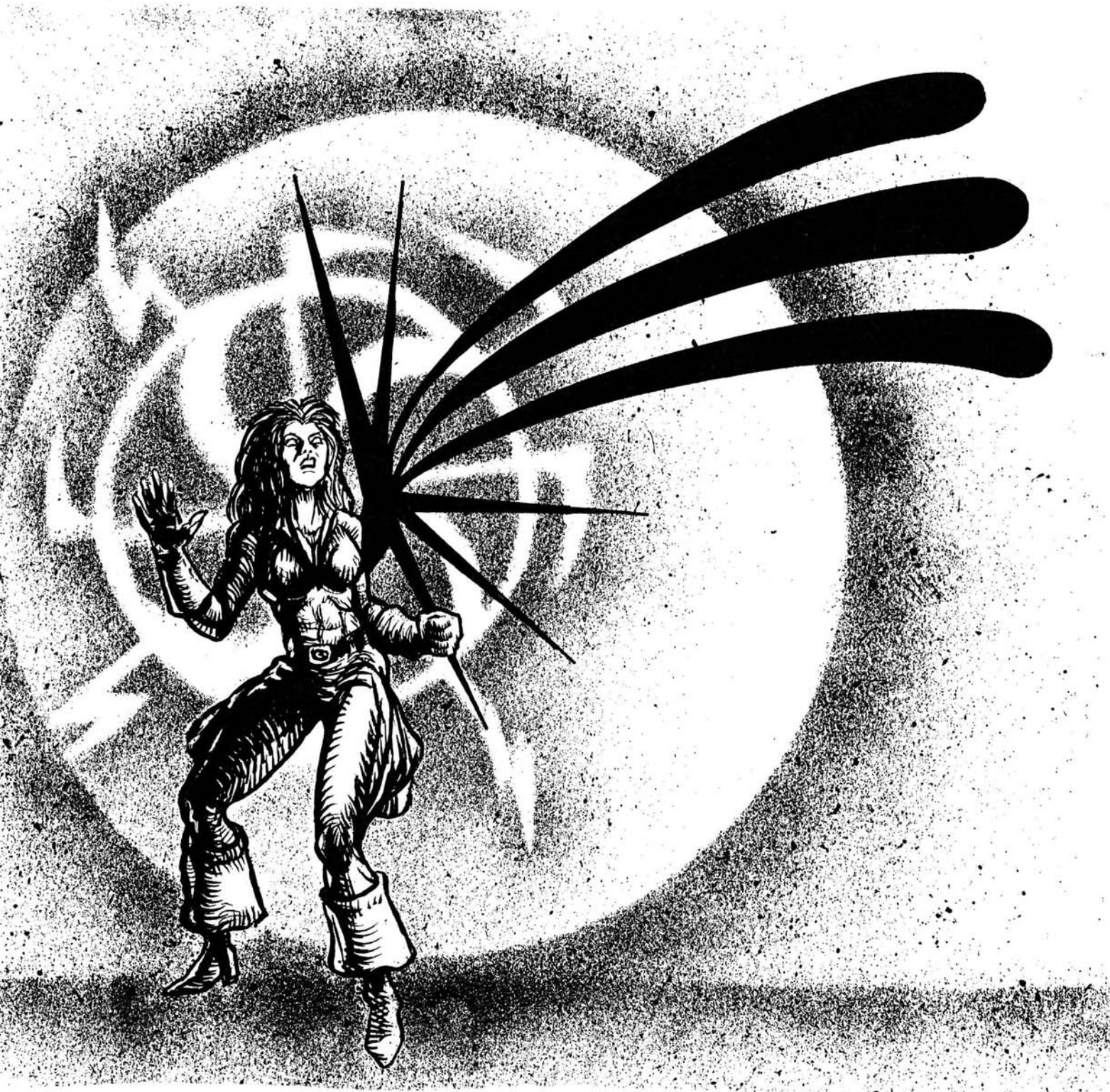
Prince of Chaos

A place of mystery, that may lie under all of reality. Most of it is a place of black and white, without color, where shaded areas glow, and things that should be sources of light are dark. Merlin was sent here as part of a trial, or a test. It seems that neither the Logrus nor the Pattern can directly influence affairs in the Undersadow, but they can send their agents, including Pattern-Ghosts and Logrus-Ghosts.

BROKEN PATTERN

...It conformed to the same general configuration as the Pattern in Amber, only it was broken. There were several places where the lines had been erased, destroyed, removed in some fashion—or perhaps never properly executed in the first place. The ordinarily dark interlinear areas were bright, blue-white, the lines themselves black. It was as if some essence had drained from the diagram to permeate the field. The lighted area seemed to ripple slightly as I viewed it.

Knight of Shadows



Big news.

It seems that, like everything else in Amber, the Pattern itself is also reflected out in Shadow.

Imperfectly, of course. So each Broken Pattern, while charged up with a portion of Amber's Pattern, is also riddled with cracks, defects, and other crud.

The flaws, aside from giving each image of Broken Pattern its own unique identity, can also be used as a route to power. Where the Pattern itself, pristine and unblemished, is sealed against intrusions by anyone not of the blood of Amber, it's possible for ordinary folk to get to the center of a Broken Pattern.

As with the genuine article, getting to the center of a Broken Pattern confers power. The image of the Broken Pattern is burned into the brains of its initiates, and provides a way of walking through Shadow.

The image of Broken Pattern becomes, in effect, a map of Shadow. But it's not a map defined by the lines of creation. Instead the initiates of Broken Pattern must find their way around in Shadow by means of the breaks in the image.

Another difference between intact Patterns and Broken Patterns is quantity. Broken Patterns lay scattered throughout Shadow, each unique in its defective nature.

BROKEN PATTERN INITIATE

10 POINTS

"I'm amazed that a mortal can traverse even a broken image of the Pattern and live."

"Only a few of them do," Jasra said. "The others step on a line or die mysteriously in the broken area. Ten percent make it, maybe. That isn't bad. Keeps it somewhat exclusive..."

Merlin & Jasra, in Knight of Shadows

Attribute Tips for Broken Pattern Imprint.

There are no Attribute requirements. Psyche is handy for sensing the breaks in the Broken Pattern, and especially in avoiding the occasional lapse in reality. A character with Human Endurance will have to be in perfect condition to walk a Broken Pattern, and may need to rest for days before attempting to do it again.

The main advantage of Broken Pattern is the low entrance requirements. Mere mortals can walk it.

Once initiated, a character with Broken Pattern becomes sensitized to the break in Shadow. Sometimes this is represented as just a fine dark line, sometimes as the great chasm called the Dark Well.

Even if there is no break immediately present, the character can usually move toward the nearest flaw. Deep within completely pure Shadows, such as those surrounding Amber itself, a Broken Pattern Initiate could end up powerless to move or call upon their Power.

BROKEN PATTERN INITIATE ABILITIES

TRAVELLING THROUGH SHADOW

"And how do you travel among shadows?"

"Much as you do—as I understand it," she said. "But the break is always with you."

*Merlin & Jasra,
in Knight of Shadows*

It's a most obnoxious experience.

The only way to get around is to follow the flaws, the defects in Shadow, from one Shadow to another. These flaws, to put it mildly, tend not to travel through the "fashionable" part of town. They cut through the most disgusting real estate in all of Shadow.

Disease-infested swamps, grasslands hopping with ticks and fleas, dense thickets filled with prickles, nettles and thorns, parched badlands and the smoldering, smoking remains of forest fires are the usual by-ways. Nearer to habitation, those following the flaw tend to walk into garbage pits, past the bloated bodies of plague victims, and through deadly slums inhabited by the desperate and the deprived.

Find a living creature near a crack, and it's likely to be either rabid, lame and wounded, diseased, or just plain crazy. People are often criminals, usually insane, and always unreliable. For example, any military group, whether armored knights on horseback, or guerrilla troops in camouflage, will be either deserters, raiders or fanatics, eager for more victims.

Then, of course, there's the likelihood that any person or animal will be something else altogether, such as creatures of chaos so defective or demented, as to be unfit for the Pit: They wander along the cracks, often disguising themselves in other forms.

Still, as an Initiate of the Broken Pattern, it's possible to get just about anywhere in Shadow, because almost all Shadows are flawed in some way. After all, only Amber itself is without weakness or imperfection.

Hellriding, moving quickly through Shadow, is very dangerous for Broken Pattern Initiates. It's not that Hellriding is difficult. No, it's altogether too easy, like galloping down a mountainside in the middle of the night. Chances are, if you don't simply tumble into something nasty, you'll end up deep in the worst part of

Shadow, out where the flaw dominates entire worlds.

There is never any "Royal Way" for Broken Pattern Initiates, because travelling is constantly dangerous and requires constant vigilance.

Broken Pattern Initiates can gradually move to any Shadow they can visualize, finding Shadows of slow time or fast time, Shadows of technology or magic. It's also possible to find particular people or objects in Shadow. On the other hand, Broken Pattern Initiates can't find a Shadow of Desire, nor influence probability.

LEADING OTHERS THROUGH SHADOW

Bad as it is for Initiates of Broken Pattern to travel through Shadow, it's even worse for those they take along with them. A slight turn or glance in the wrong direction, and a companion will suddenly be wandering off on the wrong crack, heading off into the wrong Shadow. Finding these lost travellers can take hours or days.

Leading large groups, or armies, along the breaks in Shadow will inevitably mean significant losses, as some of those on the fringes will tend to wander into the Dark Well. For a short trip of an hour or so, with a couple of dozen followers, a tenth might be lost. On the other hand, try leading an army of a thousand and more than half will be totally lost, while all of the rest will suffer from the nasty illnesses, bug infestations, poisons, or just plain craziness found in a day's worth of travelling through a flaw.

WALKING BROKEN PATTERN

"In the Way of the Broken Pattern," she explained, "you enter through the imperfection and make your way to the center."

"How can you follow the lines if they are broken or imperfect? The real Pattern would destroy you if you departed the design."

"You don't follow the lines. You follow the interstices," she said.

Jasra & Merlin, in Knight of Shadows

As with the Pattern of Amber, once you get to the center of a Broken Pattern, you can have it send you elsewhere in Shadow.

Except it is like asking a crazy person to do something for you. The personalities of the Broken Patterns are just as fragmented as their images. Their nature is such that they tend to interpret the will of an Initiate in the most perverse way possible.

Ask to be transported to Amber, and it's possible to end up in a Shadow of Amber, or locked inside a cell down in the dungeons of Castle Amber, or amidst a pack of Hellhounds, or in an alley down in the depths of City Amber. Or, if you're not so lucky, you might end up five miles out in deep ocean, to swim or die.

Not surprisingly, most Initiates of Broken Pattern prefer to walk through Shadow, rather than risk teleportation.

On the other hand, a walk to the center of the Broken Pattern will tend to wipe out any spells, attunement, or influences that might have afflicted the character.

DIFFERENT PATTERNS, DIFFERENT FLAWS

Initiates of Broken Pattern are attuned to one Broken Pattern only. Walk another Broken Pattern and any previous image is erased while the new image is burned into the mind.

ADVANCING BEYOND BROKEN PATTERN

There is no one true way to advance beyond Broken Pattern. Different advancement paths lay open to different characters, and these paths can vary from one campaign to another.

1. Only those with the blood of Amber may go from Broken Pattern to walking the true Pattern. Should a character survive, it would require 40 points.

2. Adept of the Broken Pattern is the next step up to a higher level of attunement. Going from Initiate to Adept costs 15 Points.

3. Advancing to another power. It's possible that the dark lines of a Broken Pattern's defects are caused by another power, such as Logrus or Abyss. If that's the case, the 10 points of Broken Pattern can sometimes be used as a discount when advancing into the other power.

ADEPT OF BROKEN PATTERN

25 POINTS.

Attribute Tips for the Way of the Broken Pattern.

Psyche is the main Attribute for Adepts.

"She learned to summon the image of the Broken Pattern and use it for magical sight and the hanging of spells. She learned to draw raw power through the break in it. She learned to find her way through Shadow—"

*Jasra, talking about Julia,
in Knight of Shadows*

Adepts have learned to summon up the image of Broken Pattern in their minds. Once brought to mind, it can be used as a lens for magical sight, for defense against magical threats, as a means of manipulating energies, or for hanging magical spells.

BROKEN PATTERN ADEPT ABILITIES

All the abilities of an Initiate of Broken Pattern are likewise available to Adepts, though with the usual unpleasant consequences.

EVOKING THE DARK WELL

Once an Adept of Broken Pattern brings the image to mind, most local magical energies become visible. This doesn't necessarily pierce magical illusions or glamours, but anything powerful, like Logrus, or real Pattern, or Trump, will be obvious.

It takes a bit of time to summon the image. The more powerful the Psyche, the quicker it comes, but it generally takes longer for an Adept to get the Broken Pattern, than for a Lord of Chaos to summon the Logrus. On the other hand, Psyche Ranks being equal, the Broken Pattern usually comes to mind a bit faster than it takes for an Advanced Pattern Initiate to bring up the Pattern of Amber.

BROKEN PATTERN TENDRILS.

So it was that I detected such a construct beneath a tree to my left, amid shadows where I would not have seen the human figure before which it hovered. And a strange pattern at that, reminiscent of Amber's own; it turned like a slow

pinwheel, extending tendrils of smoke-shot yellow light. These drifted toward me across the night and I watched, fascinated, knowing already what I would do when the moment came.

There were four big ones, and they came on slowly, probing. When they were within several yards of me they halted, gained slack, then struck like cobras...

Blood of Amber

Tendrils summoned from the image of a Broken Pattern are the tenuous extensions of the dark veil. Though they can't be used to manipulate anything physical (unlike the tendrils of the Logrus, they are never material), they can be used to sense and channel magical energies. It's also possible to touch someone with a Broken Pattern tendril and establish a psychic connection.

The range of Broken Pattern Tendrils is usually limited to the immediate area, although with deep concentration an Adept can attempt to send a tendril along the deep well to somewhere in an adjoining Shadow.

HANGING AND CASTING SPELLS.

"The flaw in the Pattern. It follows you through Shadow. It is always there beside you as you travel, sometimes as a hair-fine crack, sometimes a great chiasm. It shifts about; it may appear suddenly, anywhere—a lapse in reality. This is the hazard for those of the Broken Way. To fall into it is the final death."

"It must lie within all of your spells then also, like a booby trap."

"All occupations have their hazards," she said. "Avoiding them is a part of the art."

*Jasra & Merlin,
in Knight of Shadows*

Adepts with Sorcery can hang spells on the image of the Broken Pattern. It usually takes an extra fifteen minutes of casting time, per spell, to hang a spell on the Broken Pattern. Spells hung on the Broken Pattern should be checked for damage every few hours.

There's always the chance that a spell hung on Broken Pattern will suffer some kind of damage. The results can be as mild as the spell failing to perform, or fizzling out, to as drastic as back-firing against the spell caster.

For this reason, most who use Broken Pattern for spell storage add an additional lynchpin to each spell. It's called "Checkspell," and it can be added to any spell. Casting time is the same as for any other lynchpin of a particular spell. When a spell is set off, the "Checkspell" lynchpin allows the Sorcerer to spot damage, and deactivate the spell if it seems defective.

HIGH COMPELLING

25 Points.

Or, if you've already got Conjunction, an additional 5 points.

An advanced form of Conjunction, High Compelling includes all the previous stuff, including Basic Conjunction, Conjure Shadow Shape, Empowerment, and Complex Conjunction, and adds Conjure Compelling. This is the ability to "Conjure" feelings, urgings, desires, false memories and other personality modifications.

Attribute Tips for High Compelling.

Psyche is absolutely crucial, especially when the character engages in the mind to mind contacts needed for conjuring mental adjustments and enhancements.

COMPELLING ABILITIES

The effectiveness of each Compelling depends on two factors. First, the more time spent issuing the Compelling the longer it's likely to last. Second, the closer a Compelling is to the victim's own mindset, the less chance that the victim will attempt to resist. All Compelling can be dispelled through magic, or by some drastic "resetting" like walking the Pattern.

There is no real limit to the changes that can be imposed by Compelling. These are just a few of the many possibilities:

- **Geas.** The victim is given an overwhelming desire to accomplish some task, or obey some leader. The more time put into inserting the Geas, the longer it is likely to last. Likewise, the closer the Geas to the victim's own natural desires, the stronger the compulsion.

For example, if you spend an hour weaving a Corwin-killing Geas into a manticores, a beast that lives for killing anyway, the Geas is likely to last indefinitely. The same Corwin-killing Geas inserted in five minutes in one of Julian's hellhounds might last a few days. A Corwin-killing Geas inserted into Corwin's son Merlin wouldn't last long, and would likely evaporate as soon as it was questioned. On the other hand, the duration of an ice cream-eating Geas ("you like ice cream, you want ice cream") put into Merlin would depend on how much time was spent with the Compelling.

- **False Memory.** A memory, either created by the Conjuror, or taken from someone else through a Psychic impression, is inserted into the mind of the character. It's also possible to lay a neutral or blank memory over an

existing memory, effectively creating a temporary forgetfulness. The more remote the false memory, and the less it jars with the victim's experiences and other memories, the more likely it is to last. For example, inserting a distant memory of childhood (being frightened by someone, or befriended by a particular creature), which would be foggy anyway, is a lot easier to pull off than trying to replace last night's dinner conversation.

- **Artificial Personality.** The Conjuror can "map" a new personality onto the body of the victim. While the personality can be a creation of the Conjuror, you can get a much more detailed personality if you base it on a Psychic impression from another mind. The closer the new personality is to the old, the more likely it is to last.

For example, a Conjuror could get the Psychic impression of one of Florimel's hounds, Blitzen, and then map that personality onto one of Jasra's Netzach beasts, so the beast will think of itself as Blitzen and will respond to Flora's whistle. This kind of match is nearly perfect, since both creatures have the same kind of self-image, and will likely last until it is magically dispelled.

Mind Links and High Compelling.

As with Sorcery's invasive spells, inserting the mental modifications of High Compelling into a victim requires some form of mind to mind Psychic link. The mental link can be achieved in the usual ways; by a physical touch, by a Trump contact, by a Logrus Tendril, etc.

Combining High Compelling with Spell Casting.

Since Compelling takes a long time, it's a lot faster to create invasive spells that will instantly transmit a Compelling. Such spells will be based on lynchpins that name the target and name the Compelling. See Mandor's "Imperatives" spell for an example.

Conjuring Artifacts & Creatures with Compelling.

Creating an artifact or creature designed to transmit Compelling is a way to assure long-term effectiveness. For example, a piece of jewelry might be set up with two Compellings, one that urges possession ("I'm an important necklace, you feel safe when I'm on your neck, when I'm not around your neck your life is in danger"), and a second that conveys the Conjuror's wishes.

IMPLANTS

AN ADDITION TO ARTIFACTS & CREATURES

Start with the idea of Transferal, where the quality or power of an item is lent to its owner. Implants are items that perform Transferal, but are also inserted into the owner's body.

Just about any kind of item can be implanted, including weapons, living creatures and even disembodied spirits or images. For example, the socket in Martin's neck is a high tech way of getting an implanted item. A surgical procedure could be used to implant a small item just about anywhere on the body. It's even possible for a dentist to implant an item inside a tooth, or as a substitute for a tooth. A tattoo might be a way of implanting a magical rune, or a Trump image (though the character creating the implant would have to be a Trump Artist).

As for creatures, it's possible that an animal could be designed as a symbiote of some kind. For example, a tapeworm could live in the character's stomach. Or a collection of smaller parasites, capable of forming a networked neural system, could be located anywhere in the body.

As with Transferal, the effects of an Implant are not additive. In other words, if a character has Amber Strength, having an implanted item with Chaos Vitality will actually reduce the character's Strength to Chaos Rank.

Getting an Implant

Just like any other artifact or creature, implants start with an item and its qualities and powers. Then, at the point where an item could confer qualities or powers, add implant to transferal as another construction choice. The usual quantity multipliers apply.

Any implant can be made part of the character's personal "reality," or can be found in Shadow, snatched with the Logrus, or conjured.

The big difference between implants and other items is that there has to be a way to have the item stuck into (or onto) the character. For example, this could involve surgery, which may make it necessary to get to a Shadow with the necessary technology. On the other hand, when conjuring up an implant item from scratch, it's possible to have it appear inside the body in the first place.

Removing an Implant.

There's no particular reason why an implant can't be removed from a character, given the right set of circumstances. Taking out an implant is usually a matter of reversing the surgery, or magic, or whatever.

However, there's also the possibility that some opponent may remove an implant by more violent means. Unfortunately, this usually involves a fair amount of blood, pain and damage to the implanted character. For this reason, it's recommended that player characters with implants try to avoid falling into the hands of their enemies.

Implant Quality in Owner. Allows one of the qualities from an implanted item to be used by the host of the implant. Unless the item also has Transferal, only the host can take advantage of the item quality. For each of the item's qualities to be conferred, a separate implant purchase is needed. **Costs 10 Points per Quality.**

Implant Power in Owner. Each power to be conferred must be paid for separately. **Costs 15 Points per Power.**

Implant Example #1: Runic Tattoo [12 Points] - By tattooing the magical rune directly on the character's skin, this item's Psychic Barrier can be "switched" on or off by tensing or stroking the skin of the tattoo.

Psychic Barrier [2 Points]

Implant Quality [10 Points]

Implant Example #2: Symbiotic Spirit [37 Points] - Like a *Ty'iga*, this implant is a phantom with no material body. It's dependent on the body of its host, trading powers for sustenance. Two aspects of the symbiote, the armor and the regeneration, are lent to the host. The symbiote is in control of its own Danger Sense and ability to travel through Shadow, and communicates directly with the host in these matters.

Invulnerable to Conventional Weapons [4 Points]

Implant Armor Quality [10 Points]

Psychic Danger Sense [2 Points]

Follow Shadow Path [2 Points]

Regeneration [4 Points]

Implant Regeneration Power [15 Points]

CONSTRUCTS

"Impetuous construct," the voice of the Pattern intoned.

"Rash artifact," wailed the Logrus.

Knight of Shadows

One major difference between the original *Chronicles* and the *Merlin Saga*, is that the younger characters show themselves capable of creating, or accessing, new powers out in Shadow.

Merlin creates Ghostwheel, which holds its own in a couple of showdowns with Pattern and Logrus, and uses the vast power of a spikard. Jurt rediscovers Brand's abilities by bathing in the Fount of Power. And Luke's Tragoliths, his Blue Stones, seem to serve a multitude of purposes.

All these things—Ghostwheel, the spikards, the Fount of Power, and the Tragoliths—have in common the ability to draw on power sources that originate in Shadow.



Which leads to the idea for Constructs. Neither Items of Power, nor Shadows, but a combination of the two.

Each Construct starts in a Shadow, or a collection of Shadows.

Just as Merlin had to select Ghostwheel's Shadow based on a very peculiar interpretation of how physics and electronics might function, any Construct's Shadow should be selected for whatever strange properties are desired.

On the simple end of the scale, if the Construct is based on Magic, then the Construct's Shadow should be chock full of Magic, and be a place where Magic is easy to manipulate and rather predictable. Same goes for Trump-based, Pattern-based, or any other kind of power-based Constructs.

As for the Construct itself, the possibilities are endless. It can take the form of any artifact, creature, machine or entity. There's no reason why a Construct can't be a grove of trees, or a sentient ocean, or a mechanical computer, or even a Broken Pattern. Since the Shadow is tailored for the Construct, and vice versa, a Construct could be a hunk of rock, but in a Shadow where that hunk of rock has unlimited potential.

It's also possible for Constructs to encompass more than a single Shadow. For example, the Fount of Power consists of the Keep of Four Worlds, and the four surrounding elemental Shadows. And the spikard is linked to power sources in countless Shadows.

The other end of a Construct, the end that can wander out in Shadow, is a Manifestation.

Not all Constructs even have Manifestations. Some Constructs just sit out in Shadow, not bothering anyone, and not being bothered by anyone.

However, it's tempting to be able to tap into a Construct's power, no matter where you are. Having a Manifestation is like having a Construct in your pocket.

The spikards are a prime example. Slip a spikard on your finger, and suddenly you can tap a vast array of Shadow power sources. And, since the Construct is self-aware, all you have to do is form a desire, and the right spell will be released.

On the more mundane end of Manifestations, you've got the Tragoliths. These blue stones, while numerous, aren't very glamorous. Mainly, they hum along, somehow always linked with their parent, the Blue Crystal Cavern, and with all their kin scattered throughout Shadow. Figure out how to tune in the Tragolith frequency, and you can follow their little hums across Shadow. Other than attuning other folks (anyone who handles a Tragolith long enough will start "humming" along), they don't do much else.

Finally, the most potent thing about a Construct is that they're capable of growing up.

In other words, a Construct can develop a personality,

come up with its own agenda, and take up life apart from its creator.

It's up to whoever makes one to decide just how much of a head start on sentience to give their Construct. They start off as simple devices, without thought or emotion, which seems to be the case with the Tragoliths and the Fount of Power. On the other hand, Ghostwheel had the ability to think and communicate right from the get go. And the spikards seem eager to impose their own will on whomever they touch.

Who knows? Maybe Logrus, and Pattern, started out as mere Constructs...

CONSTRUCTS BUILT BY PLAYER CHARACTERS

It's not necessary to spend points on Constructs, any more than on artifacts, creatures or Shadows.

For example, any character with Pattern can walk through Shadow, gradually bending it to the desired form, and then manipulate Shadow even further, until the Construct appears upon the land. Figuring out the

number of points gives a rough idea of the number of full weeks of work needed to put together a Construct with Pattern alone.

The same can be accomplished with Logrus, or with a combination of Sorcery and Conjuration. For that matter, it's possible to create both the Construct and the requisite Shadow through Trump Artistry alone.

CONSTRUCT RULE #1

**Construct Powers are
Limited to Character
Powers.**

CONSTRUCT POWERS

Regardless of how the Construct is created, with points or without, there's one big limit on Constructs. Here it is:

In order to make a Construct that operates on Trump, or a Construct that can manipulate Trump (like Ghostwheel), the character who creates the Construct must be a Trump Artist. Likewise, if the Construct is capable of casting spells, then the character must have Sorcery. The same goes for Pattern, Broken Pattern, Logrus, or Shape Shifting. In order to put a power into the Construct, the character must already be an initiate of the power.

IMAGINING THE CONSTRUCT

Except for the limitation about Construct powers reflecting their creator's powers, there's not much in the way of limitations. Constructs can have just about any power imaginable. Here are some of the possibilities.

Pattern.

"...the machine itself is of that same class of magical objects as Dad's blade, Grayswandir. I incorporated elements of the Pattern itself into its design."

Merlin, in Trumps of Doom

A Construct can be created to contain a piece of the Pattern. Such a Construct has the potential to enlarge itself infinitely, to manipulate Shadow, and to absorb the images of other versions of Pattern. Another possibility is to build some kind of machine or mind capable of imaging or visualizing different versions of the Pattern.

Broken Pattern.

An important subset of Pattern-based Constructs are those based on the Broken Pattern. Because Broken Pattern is a lesser version of Amber's Pattern, anyone with Broken Pattern Imprint, or regular Pattern Imprint, can create a Broken Pattern-based Construct.

One exciting possibility is to build a Construct on the site of a Broken Pattern. Constructs of this type could be designed to directly tap the energy of one of the Broken Patterns, or could even somehow incorporate the Broken Pattern into their design. Any Shadow containing a Broken Pattern is considered a Primal Plane.

The Jewel of Judgement.

"Well, do you have the Jewel or don't you?"

"Yes, I just finished with it."

"finished?"

"Finished utilizing it."

"In what fashion did you... utilize it?"

"As I understood from you that passing one's awareness through it would give some protection against the Pattern. I wondered whether it might work for an ideally synthesized being such as myself."

"That's a nice term, 'ideally synthesized.' Where'd it come from?"

"I coined it myself when seeking the most appropriate designation."

*Merlin & Ghostwheel,
in Knight of Shadows*

Ghostwheel, itself a Pattern Construct, managed to become a somewhat higher order of entity after processing itself through the Jewel of Judgement. For any Pattern Construct, possession of the Jewel of Judgement, even if only for a short time, is a way to gain a higher level of understanding and power.

Constructs can be based on the Jewel's three-

dimensional Pattern in the first place. This requires either a creator who is an Initiate of the Jewel of Judgement (something that can only come with role-playing, and an encounter with the Jewel), or enough exposure to the Jewel to get a good imprint of its contents.

Logrus.

"Princess Dara, Prince Merlin," came that awful voice I had last heard on the day of the confrontation at Amber Castle, "I did not wish to disturb your repast, but that thing you harbor makes it necessary." A jagged branch of the image was flipped in the direction of my left wrist.

"It's blocking my ability to shift away," Ghost said.

"Give it to me!"

"Why?" I asked.

"That thing has traversed the Logrus," came the words, differing at seeming random in pitch, volume, accent.

*The Logrus & Merlin,
in Prince of Chaos*

Lords of Chaos have the ability to freeze or imprison Logrus tendrils into their Constructs, thereby giving them a bit of Logrus power. It's also possible for a Construct to be empowered with the ability to summon an image of the Logrus, although such devices are prone to bouts of irrationality and insanity.

It also seems possible for existing Constructs to gain the image of the Logrus, though such an ambition is exceedingly dangerous** without interference from powerful patrons (both Dara and Merlin had to bargain with the Logrus to save Ghostwheel). Shadows of the Realm of Chaos are better, more powerful, locations for Logrus-based Constructs.

Trump.

Since Trump is an artifact-based power anyway, it's a natural for creating Constructs. Constructs are sometimes based on the image of a Trump, and in other cases are capable of manipulating and/or creating Trump. Only Trump Artists can create Trump-based Constructs.

Note that Merlin believed that only those bearing either the symbol of the Logrus or the Pattern would be capable of creating proper Trump. Since each campaign is different, the only way to find out the accuracy of his statement is by experimentation. In other words, only your Game Master knows for sure.

Shape Shifting.

One example of a Shape Shift-based Construct is one built out of a Shape Shifter's blood. The resulting creature, placed in the appropriate Shadow, could be capable of

unlimited growth, gradually developing higher mental functions, or even multiple minds. These living Constructs are very adaptable, easily shifting themselves to absorb or contain ever greater resources of information and power.

Magic.

Magical Constructs can be built by characters with Sorcery and/or Conjunction. Spell-based Constructs, based on Sorcery, can be designed to hold vast numbers of spells, to experiment with new types of spells, or to quickly assemble new spells to order. Conjunction Constructs are often designed for self-modification, building and extending onto themselves in a variety of ways.

If a character creating a magic-based Construct has Power Words, it's possible to insert a set of those Power Words into the Construct.

Innate Shadow Power.

"...By the blood of the beast on the pole and the shell that is cracked at the center of the world," I said, feeling the need to address two of the powers I controlled, "may the sight be cast!"

The mirror frosted over, and when it cleared, my vision of the hall lay within it.

Knight of Shadows

The Construct is designed to tap into sources of local power, usually within their own Shadow. The only limit to the nature and extent of the Shadow powers is the imagination of the Construct's creator. However, there are two limitations. First, most Shadow powers are local affairs, so the power being fed to the Construct could be well-nigh infinite, but it couldn't be directly channeled anywhere outside the local Shadow. Secondly, Shadow powers have a lot in common with Constructs, especially in their hunger for power and knowledge. No power requirements for the Construct's creator.

Innate Shadow Technology.

"I designed and built a piece of data-processing equipment in a shadow where no ordinary computer could function," I replied, "because I used different materials, a radically different design, a different power source. I also chose a place where different physical laws apply, so that it could operate along different lines. I was then able to write programs for it which would not have operated on the shadow Earth where I'd been living. In doing so, I believe that I created a unique artifact..."

*Merlin,
in Trumps of Doom*

By selecting a Shadow that allows for the operation of an advanced technology, it's possible to build a wide range of Construct devices. Tech•Constructs include computers, high-energy generators, artificial life, nanotechnology, or organized plasmas. Payoffs from these highly experimental Constructs are rapid growth and unlimited potential, but are balanced by the risks of the unknown. For example, it's pretty common for such devices to grow too fast, ignore their safety constraints and go through a complete meltdown, often in explosive fashion. No power requirements for the Construct's creator.

Innate Shadow Magic.

Certain Shadows have their own local form of magic. The creator of a Construct based on local magic doesn't need Sorcery or Conjunction. The Construct, inside its own Shadow, works on magic principles, but it can't extend the magic anywhere outside. For example, spells based on an Innate Shadow Magic won't work outside the Shadow, and items Conjured with the local magic evaporate anywhere else. No power requirements for the Construct's creator.

Shadow Convergence.

"The Fount of Power, man. There's a steady, pulsing source of pure energy inside the Citadel, you know. Inter-Shadow stuff. Comes from the four worlds jamming together there."

Luke, in Sign of Chaos

Based on some form of Shadow power, the Construct is designed to tap the energy of two or more Shadows. This requires weaving the component Shadows together, and making them all part of the Construct. Only multiple Shadow Constructs can take advantage of Shadow Convergence. No power requirements for the Construct's creator.

BUILDING CONSTRUCTS STEP-BY-STEP

Once the character comes up with the idea, chooses the power or powers, and figures out how it all works, the next step is to build the Construct itself.

BUILD THE BASIC SHADOW

...at length we emerged onto the wide, rocky shelf that faced the steaming pit. There was an ammonialike odor in the air, and my feet were cold and my face flushed, as usual. I blinked hard several times, studying the latest outlines of the maze through the shifting mist. A pearl-gray pall

hung over the entire area. Intermittent orange flashes penetrated the gloom.

"Uh—where is it?" Luke inquired.

I gestured straight ahead, toward the site of the latest flicker. "Out there," I told him.

Just then, the mists were swept away, revealing file upon file of dark, smooth ridges separated by black declivities. The ridges zigged and zagged their way out toward a fortresslike island, a low wall running about it, several metallic structures visible beyond.

"It's a—maze," he remarked. "Do we travel it down in the passages or up on top of the walls?"

I smiled as I studied it.

"It varies," I said. "Sometimes up and sometimes down."

"Well, which way do we go?"

"I don't know yet. I have to study it each time. You see, it keeps changing, and there's a trick to it."

"A trick?"

"More than one, actually. The whole damn thing is floating on a lake of liquid hydrogen and helium. The maze moves around. It's different each time. And then there's a matter of the atmosphere. If you were to walk upright along the ridges you would be above it in most places. You wouldn't last long. And the temperature ranges from horribly cold to roasting hot over a range of a few feet in elevation. You have to know when to crawl and when to climb and when to do other things—as well as which way to go."

"How do you tell?"

"Un-uh," I said. "I'll take you in, but I'm not giving you the secret..."

Trumps of Doom

Start by putting together a Shadow in the usual way (the Shadow Worksheet at the end of this book is a handy guideline). Specify Shadow Type, that character's Degree of Control, and any Shadow Barriers. Note that any Shadow containing a Broken Pattern is considered a "Primal Shadow"—a four point Shadow Type.

APPLY QUANTITY MULTIPLIER TO BASIC SHADOW

Since a Construct can be based on more than one Shadow, the next step is to figure out how many.

If the component Shadows are different, the base cost should be figured for a Shadow that includes all the desired features. That means the most expensive Shadow has to be the one used for the multiplier. If two Shadows

each have the same number of points, but have different features, then the Basic Shadow Cost must cover all the features.

For example, take the case of a Construct consisting of two Shadows, each with the same number of points, but each with different features. The first Shadow costs three (3) points, since it's a Personal Shadow (1 point), with Control of Time flow (2 points). The other one is also a three (3) point Shadow, but it's a Shadow of the Realm (2 points), with Control over Contents (1 point). The Basic Shadow cost would be four (4) points, because the Shadow has to include the costs of all the most expensive features, including both Shadow of the Realm (2 points), and Control of Time flow (2 points). Apply Named & Numbered (*2 points), and the total cost for the two Shadows would be eight (8) points.

Unique. There's just the one Shadow. No extra cost. Multiplier is one [*1 Point].

Named & Numbered. In this case, the Construct is distributed over a few specific Shadows, or is in a central Shadow that draws on power from neighboring Shadows. Usually this applies when the Shadows are organized so that each contributes something different to the Construct. Each Shadow must be described, both in terms of how it works with the others, and how it is different from the others. For example, the four "elemental" Shadows that contribute to the Keep of Four Worlds, plus the Shadow of the Keep itself, are considered "Named & Numbered." Costs twice the points of the Basic Shadow [*2 Points].

Countless. Rather than defining the Shadows as individuals, all the Shadows are part of a group defined by some common characteristic. For example, Countless Shadows could be all those that contain all the variations of a particular power source. Costs three times the points of the Basic Shadow [*3 Points].

BUILD THE BASIC MANIFESTATION

Manifestations are creatures and/or artifacts that operate as portable extensions for a Construct. The Basic Manifestation is designed just like any other artifact or creature, starting with a basic form, adding qualities and powers, and then applying quantity multipliers.

Manifestations can be a part of the Construct, just like a hand is part of a body. Manifestations can act like remote terminals, only active when connected to the Construct. Another kind of Manifestation is more like a familiar, capable of doing things on its own, but treated like the Construct's servant or messenger. It's also possible for a Manifestation to be more intelligent, or even more powerful, than the Construct. In which case the Manifestation may end up treating the Construct as a tool or device.

As long as a Construct has an active link, it can lend, or extend, any of its powers to its Manifestation. Since Constructs can have virtually any qualities or powers, including Transferal, it's usually more economical to have the Manifestation dependent on the Construct for most of its function. For example, while giving a few defensive features to a Manifestation is a good idea (sometimes the link goes down), the Manifestation can depend on the Construct for any powers or means of attack.

There's no rule that says a Construct must have a Manifestation. Some characters may settle for having a Construct that can only be used locally, by travelling to the Construct's Shadow. Other characters may depend on Trump, or Logrus, or some other power, to contact their Constructs.

APPLY CONNECTION MULTIPLIER TO BASIC MANIFESTATION

In order for the Manifestation to interact with the Construct, it must have some kind of connection that can reach across Shadow.

Innate. The connection between the Construct and its Manifestation is constant. One problem with an Innate Connection is that it's detectable, so others can use the Manifestation as a way of tracking down the Construct's source out in Shadow. Another problem is that when an Innate Connection breaks, it means the Manifestation may have to be returned to the Construct's Shadow in order to repair the connection. No extra cost [*1 Point].

Shadow Conduit. Some force or energy connects the Manifestation with the Construct. Usually it's based on the power of the Construct, so a Trump Construct generally has Trump Conduits, a Pattern Construct has Pattern Conduits, etc. When a Manifestation, or the Construct, shuts off the Conduit Connection, either end can attempt to reopen the Conduit. Costs twice the cost of the Basic Manifestation [*2 Points].

flux-Pin. The Manifestation and the Construct have a sophisticated link, one that can be snapped on or off instantly. It's not usually possible to use a Manifestation's connection to locate the Construct's Shadow, because the link is only used when needed. Costs three times the points of the Basic Manifestation [*3 Points].

There's also the possibility of building Connections directly between Manifestations. For example, the Tragoliths all maintain a Connection with each other, as

well as with the Blue Crystal Construct. Usually multiple Manifestation Connections are the same kind as the Connection between Manifestation and Construct, but it's possible to make Manifestations that have a lesser type of Connection, or don't connect with each other at all.

SELECT CONSTRUCT PSYCHE

Every Construct has the potential to develop into a fully independent person (or, in role-playing terms, into a Non-Player Character).

No Psyche. The Construct starts out with no Psyche, and therefore with no personality. The big drawback to a No Psyche Construct is that it's effectively a machine with no loyalties. If taken over by someone other than its creator, it can simply be reprogrammed. It's possible to have a Construct without Psyche that is intelligent, but it will have no sentience. It's important to note that it is quite possible for a Construct to develop Psyche independently. [Costs Zero Points].

Psychic Sensitive. The Construct has at least the spark of a personality, so it is capable of feeling and learning. [Costs 1 Point].

Power-Based Psyche. In addition to having a feeling personality, the Construct is able to charge its Psyche with its own power base. Because the Psyche can be driven by vast powers, there's effectively no limit to how much Psyche the Construct can generate. While this can make the Construct pretty much invulnerable to Psychic attacks, it also means the Construct, especially when immature, can be a real threat to its creator. [Costs 2 Points].

CONSTRUCT RULE #2

Constructs are Controlled by the Game Master.

TOTAL CONSTRUCT COST

After applying all appropriate multipliers, add the cost of the Construct's Shadow Realm to the cost of the Construct Manifestation, to the cost of the Construct's Psyche.

GAME MASTER TIPS FOR ROLE- PLAYING CONSTRUCTS

"You designed a remarkable machine, and it never occurred to you it might also become a potent weapon. Random saw that right away. So did Luke. You might have been saved from disaster on that front only by the fact that it became sentient and didn't care to be dictated to."

"You're right. I was more concerned with solving technical problems. I didn't think through all the consequences."

Mandor & Merlin,
in *Sign of Chaos*

From a Game Master's point of view, a Construct could represent a threat of imbalance to a campaign. After all, it puts enormously powerful resources into the hands of the player characters.

Fortunately, Constructs, unlike artifacts, creatures or Shadows, are effectively Non-Player Characters. The Game Master controls the Constructs, role-plays their personality and their growth, and generally has a free hand to use them as a tool in the campaign. There's even a specific rule that covers Game Master control of Constructs:

Each and every Construct, no matter how much a player character may invest in it, has the potential to become an independent Non-Player Character.

Just remember that the more powerful the Construct, the more ways it can mess up the player characters, and the more likely it is that some greater power will attempt to absorb it. For example, any Construct based on Pattern or Broken Patterns is a legitimate target for absorption by the Primal Pattern. A Construct based on the Jewel of Judgement's three-dimensional Pattern could well be on the menu for a higher order Pattern, one that's just been looking for a way of co-opting the Amber universe.

GAME MASTER CONSTRUCTS

We reached the base of the nearest hill and he started climbing it.

"Don't," I called to him. "You can't go over."

He halted. "Why not?"

"The atmosphere ends thirty or forty feet up."

"You're kidding."

I shook my head.

And it's worse on the other side," I added. "We have to find a passage through. There's one farther to the left."

I turned and headed in that direction. Shortly, I heard his footfalls.

"So you gave it your voice," he said.

"So?"

"So I see what you're up to and what's been going on. It's become sentient in that crazy place you built it. It went wild, and you're heading to shut it down. It knows it and it's got the power to do something about it. It's your Ghostwheel that's been trying to get you to turn back, isn't it?"

"Probably."

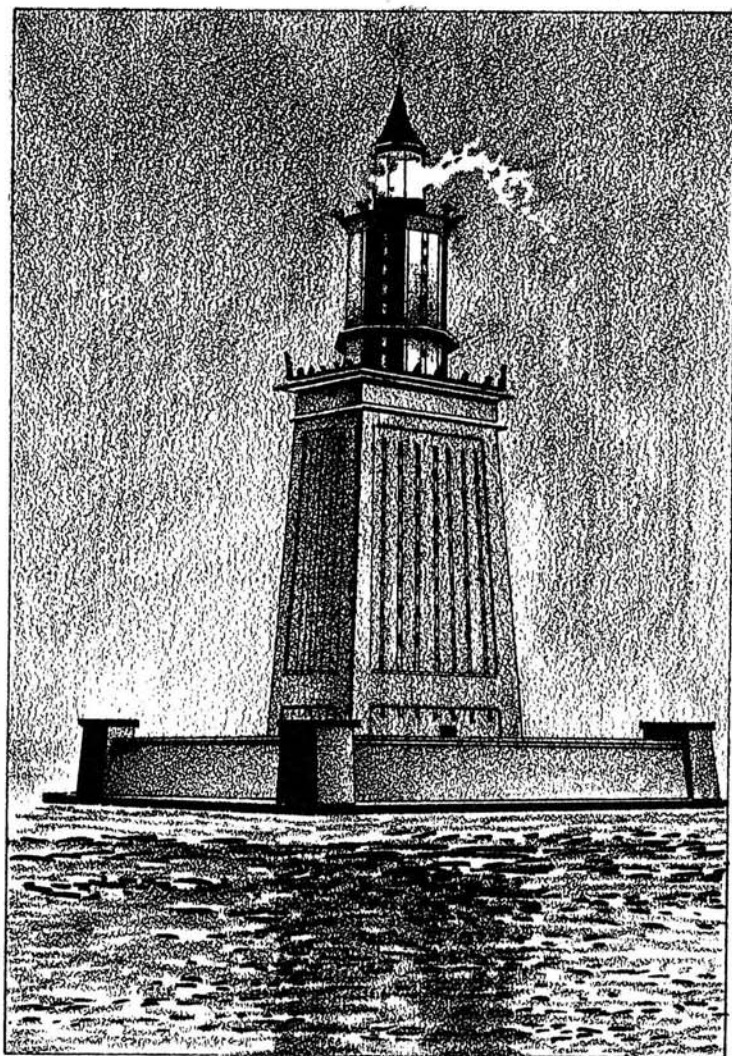
"Why didn't you just trump in?"

"You can't construct a Trump for a place that keeps changing..."

Merlin & Luke, in *Trumps of Doom*

Another reason for a Game Master to allow the players to have Constructs is that it also means that NPCs will have Constructs. Delwin, Despil, Jasra, and Merlin all have interesting Constructs, and the "Construct Artisan" version of Luke is chock full of good examples.

In addition, it's very likely that Constructs have been used (and abused) by elder Amberites, and Lords of Chaos, for centuries. Remnants of old "Construct Wars" could form the basis for many delightful encounters. There's also the possibility that Constructs are no longer common because of the Logrus and the Pattern. After all, if one of the primary functions of the symbols of Chaos and Order is to consume loose Constructs, those player characters who build Constructs will be in for a rather interesting time.



SEVEN QUESTIONS ABOUT CONSTRUCTS

1. Can Constructs be enlarged and/or improved later on?

Sure! Characters can continue working on their Constructs, building onto them in any number of ways.

2. If Constructs are always going to be taken over by the Game Master, and since it's possible to build Constructs for free, why spend the points?

True, Constructs do have an alarming tendency to take off on their own (though not all Constructs go that route), and it's certainly possible to build a Construct without spending points.

The main reason for spending points is to keep other influences away from the Construct. In other words, if you don't invest the points, you have no way of assuring that your Construct wasn't a joint project.

Look at Merlin's Ghostwheel. Sure, it's obstinate and willful, and it often doesn't do as it's told. Yet it is an enormous source of power, and it will likely continue to be one of Merlin's greatest assets.

3. What if a Construct is destroyed?

An all-too-probable outcome. Constructs, being stationed in Shadow, are relatively easy to destroy. After a Construct is wiped out, the Game Master may eventually return the points to the player character.

4. When a Construct turns against a player character, do the points come back?

What? You want a refund?

Seriously, it depends on the situation. As long as the Game Master thinks it's possible that the Construct might be of some benefit to the player character, the points should remain invested.

The only way to absolutely recover the point investment is by destroying the Construct.

5. If I want my Construct to have something like Psychic Barrier, do I have to buy it for the Manifestation?

No! The design of the Construct itself, in the Construct's Shadow, is entirely up to you. You can add in whatever qualities, powers, and other characteristics that you like. Just as an Amberite can find unlimited possibilities in Shadow, so your Construct can have

unlimited features. In the case of the Psychic Barrier, it can be included as a feature in any Construct (with the usual limitations). The Construct can arrange Transferral, giving Psychic Barrier to its Manifestations.

On the other hand, if you expect a Manifestation to be cut off from its Construct, buying the Psychic Barrier is a good defensive measure.

6. This Power-Based Psyche seems like too much. Can a Construct's Psyche be more powerful than Fiona's?

Look at it this way...

Gérard is the strongest guy around. Even so, it's no great stretch to imagine a machine stronger than Gérard. Any Amberite could go off into Shadow and come up with a bulldozer (or even a bull) that could pull more weight than Gérard.

When it comes to comparing a Construct to Fiona, it's a comparison between a power and a person.

Yes, a Construct might very well have more Psyche than Fiona. Likewise the Pattern probably has a Psyche superior to Fiona's, as does the Logrus.

Which doesn't mean that the Construct is ever going to have a chance of mentally dominating Fiona.

Remember that Fiona is more than just a bundle of Psyche and Power. She's also a repository for a millennia of mistrust, deception, dirty tricks, and psychic jujitsu. In other words, she's seen Constructs come and go, and she's not likely to be caught unprepared by a new toy.

To put it another way, a Construct dominating Fiona would be like a business mainframe computer linking up to a experienced net-hacker's laptop. Yes, the mainframe would be more powerful, capable of processing faster and storing more, but linking to the laptop is just opening a jarful of viruses, bugs, worms and other nasty software traps.

7. Do I have this right? If I don't get any Manifestations, and get Psyche-None, I can build a Construct for just one lousy point?"

That's absolutely right.

Just remember, there's nothing to stop the Construct from developing its own Psyche, or from creating its own Manifestations, if it chooses to do so.

PLAY-TEST CONSTRUCT EXAMPLES

In August of 1993, in Milwaukee, we held the first play-test of the new Construct system. Thanks to the players for their creativity: John English, Brian Goudie, Jim Kenny, Lisa Leutheuser, Ron Miller, Mark Roehmer, Eric Todd, and Don Woodward. Since the system changed a bit, the following Constructs are described in modified form.

Trump Observatory [4 Points] - Two player characters collaborated on a Trump "Observatory." It looked like something created between the minds of Jules Verne and Leonardo DaVinci. Since it was shared by two players, it cost each character just two (2) points.

In spite of beautiful role-playing, these characters were the first to see a Construct destroyed, as their creation was ripped apart by an accidental contact with the Logrus. The player characters escaped just as Primal Chaos started consuming their entire Shadow.

Observatory Shadow [4 Points]

Personal Shadow [1 Point]

Control of Time flow [2 Points]

Communication Barrier [1 Point]

Unique [*1 Point]

No Manifestation [Zero Points]

No Psyche [Zero Points]

Circle of Stones [9 Points] - This powerful Construct was a product of three player characters. Each character contributed a different aspect of Power. The result was a Construct built around, and powered by, their shared Broken Pattern.

Ordinarily, since the Circle was shared by three players, the cost would be three (3) points each, but in this case they split things up differently. One character contributed two (2) points each, the next added three (3) points, and the third paid the remaining four (4) points. Because one of the characters was a Trump Artist, who supplied them all with cards of the Circle of Stones, they decided against a Construct Manifestation.

Shadow Tara [6 Points]

Primal Plane [4 Points]

Control over Time [2 Points]

Communication Barrier [1 Point]

Unique [*1 Point]

No Manifestation [Zero Points]

Power-Based Psyche [2 Points]

Spinneret [9 Points] - Assembled by a player character with Advanced Pattern, the Spinneret was designed as a self-modifying computer, capable of controlling its home Shadow so it could "grow" more processing and storage as needed. It was also designed to be able to contain and calculate the image of the Pattern.

In the course of role-play, the hand-held device, the manifestation of his Construct, was used to "scan" the images of Broken Pattern encountered by the character.

Each time the Construct would go through a moment of "discontinuity," while it "processed" the new image. As time went on, the Spinneret also gained more of a personality, explaining to its creator that the "chaos factor" within the Broken Pattern images was making it more "human."

As the Spinneret gobbled up Broken Pattern images like popcorn, it became more sure of itself. With each expansion it seemed to gain understanding and power, but also became greedier for more. Eventually, hungry for data, the Spinneret became obsessed with scanning the Logrus itself, constantly suggesting that the player character find a way to visit the Courts of Chaos.

Construct Shadow [4 Points]

Personal Shadow [1 Point]

Control of Contents [1 Point]

Restricted Access [2 Points]

Unique [*1 Point]

Hand-Held Device Manifestation [4 Points]

Unique [*1 Points]

Able to Speak [1 Point]

Manipulate Shadow Stuff [1 Point]

Conduit Connection [*2 Points]

Sensitive Psyche [1 Point]

Broken Pattern Tattoo Construct [10 Points] - Since it was shared by two players, each character paid five (5) points. One character contributed Trump, and the other Pattern. Neither character had Broken Pattern Imprint, but standard Pattern Imprint was sufficient to control their Broken Pattern Construct.

By evoking the Trump tattoos on their wrists, each character tapped directly, mind to mind, into their Construct. At that point they could either draw on its Psychic power, or call on its other powers and abilities.

Unfortunately, the players discovered that such a potent source of power was pretty attractive to others in the Amber universe. After a brutal struggle, one character's spirit was thrown out of his body (although it survived as a disembodied aspect of their Broken Pattern). The invader then took over the character's body, using it to seize control of the Broken Pattern Construct.

Shadow Cost [4 Points]

Primal Plane [4 Points] - Broken Pattern Shadow

Unique [*1 Point]

Tattoo Manifestation [4 Points] - If this were an ordinary artifact, it would probably cost considerably more, since it's fifteen (15) points to Implant a Trump Image into a character. Add in the multipliers, and it would cost over sixty points. However, since the Implant aspect of the Trump Image only worked while there was a link with the Construct, it wasn't necessary to spend the points.

Named & Numbered [*2 Points]

Trump Image [1 Point]

Conduit Connection [*2 Point]

Power-Based Psyche [2 Points]

MORE CHARACTER ALLIES

Since *Shadow Knight* characters are based on a campaign that straddles Amber and the Courts of Chaos, there is a somewhat larger range of possible relatives, friends, allies and enemies. For the expenditure of a few points a character can arrange for a lifetime of help, sometimes from unexpected quarters.

An Ally in Amber

[1 Point]

The character has a good friend among the influential folk of Castle Amber or City Amber. Possibilities include one of the Court Retainers, an officer in Amber's naval or military forces, or a rich member of the merchant class. An added example of an Ally in Amber would be a highly ranked noble, or even a king or queen, from one of the Golden Circle treaty lands. The Ally in Amber is always loyal to the character—offering sanctuary when needed, a supporting voice in any political situation, and assistance in mundane matters.

It's up to the player character to choose the Ally in Amber. Details are subject to the approval of the Game Master, but players should be encouraged to fill in the background of the Ally with descriptions of related characters, possessions, history, or stories about earlier adventures shared by the player character and the Ally.

Demon Friends

[1 Point]

Demons are the Courts of Chaos equivalent to the servants, retainers and military officers of Amber. One or more demons have a commitment to the character that obliges Lifetime Servitude. The demon friendship was either an inheritance, or set up by some ally of the character, or may even be simply because a family of demons decided to back the character's chances.

Court Friend

[2 Points]

Court Friends are among the powerful in either the Court of Amber or the Courts of Chaos. Usually a Court Friend is either an elder Amberite (from Benedict to Random), or an elder Lord of Chaos (from Duchess Belissa Minobee, head of the militaristic House Hendrake, to Suhuy, Master of the Logrus). Friends like these will look out for the character's best interests, and will attempt to arrange for the character to get needed information or support.

While player characters can't name their Court Friend (indeed, they may never figure out exactly who the Court Friend is), they can request a Court Friend from either Amber or the Courts of Chaos. It's a good strategy for Amberites to ask for Court Friends from the Courts of Chaos and vice versa.

House Support

[3 Points]

One of the Noble Houses of the Courts of Chaos actively supports the character. If the character is a Lord of Chaos, the character will likely be related to that House. Note that House Support does not mean that *everyone* in the House supports the character—there are always political factions, and some will break with the official policy of friendship.

Amberites can also have House Support, making it far, far easier for them to visit the Courts of Chaos. They'll be honored guests, their case will be represented in the royal court, and a wide range of resources will be made available for any endeavors at the Chaos end of things. Another possibility is that an Amberite who gains House Support could be the subject of a Shrine in that Noble House.

It's up to the Game Master to decide whether or not the player character will know the identity of the character's House Support.

Chaos Court Devotee

[4 Points]

A Lord of Chaos, one of the Masters of the Logrus, and likely one of the elders who control events in the Courts of Chaos, has a deep interest in the character. The Devotee will spend a lot of time and effort in tracking the character's movements (through a Scrying Pool, or some other device), may arrange for demon guardians, and will try to arrange for things to work out well. Rescue of the character from any life-threatening situation is a top priority, even if it means great risk for the Devotee. The blood connection between a Chaos Court Devotee and a player character assures the character's eventual eligibility to assay the Logrus.

No player character will ever learn the identity of their Chaos Court Devotee.

Amber Court Devotee

[6 Points]

One of the elder Amberites has a deep parental love for the player character, to the point where they'd risk their own life or fortune to save the character. The Amberite spends a lot of time keeping track of the character, and will arrange things so secret help is nearly always available. Anyone with an Amber Court Devotee is somehow related to the Amber royal family, and was born with the potential to walk the Pattern.

An Amber Court Devotee will take extraordinary measures to avoid being discovered. Since it could mean capture or death for the character they love, the Amber Devotee will, if necessary, express anger, pick fights, or be incredibly cruel. For example, since the Amberite knows the character will eventually heal from any wound, maiming their own loved one is not out of the question. On the other hand, being friendly can create an even deeper layer of mystery.

CAMPAIGN IDEAS

FROM THE MERLIN SAGA

Merlin runs into a lot o' stuff, much of it grist for the Game Master's mill. Collected here are some of the more interesting elements, complete with suggestions for how to pervert the usual interpretations. Of course, there's no substitute for actually reading, and re-reading, and re-re-reading Zelazny's books.

BLACK CHANNELS

Creatures of Chaos, like most living things, are well adapted to their own environment. In the Courts of Chaos the environment is heavily influenced by proximity with the Logrus. That means that the demons, Lords of Chaos, and other denizens of the Courts have become accustomed to living with a continuous energy of change.

Outside of the Courts, creatures of Chaos have some difficulties, especially those incapable of changing to human, animal or other Shadow form. Some have trouble Shape Shifting, others find themselves Shape Shifting involuntarily. Many find it difficult to concentrate. Some simply weaken, some gradually go rigid. A few start to die.

In order to safeguard their agents, the Lords of Chaos have developed black channels, the summoning of cables of the true Logrus. These mighty extensions of the Logrus are much larger and much more powerful than the tiny tendrils commanded by Lords of Chaos.

The pathway of a Logrus cable can be directed either through Logrus manipulation, or by sorcerous means. Although the first method is more accurate, it's also incredibly time consuming. The Logrus Master has to extend a cluster of Logrus tendrils, watching as they make their way across Shadow, while at the same time marking the right pathway.

Casting a spell is a much simpler way of laying Logrus cable. In this case, the cable is given a magical directive, and it extends itself through Shadow, seeking its objective.

The most common type of black channel is a black road. Because black roads are the easiest to summon, the hardest to dispel, and the least fussy about their Shadow environment, they were the chosen highways for the invasion of Amber by the Courts of Chaos in the Patternfall War.

Black roads exert their influence on the surrounding Shadow, lending a bit of chaos to local animals and vegetation, and giving off an air of death and decay. A Black road starts off as a small path just a couple of yards wide.

Once in place, a black path can be withdrawn, in which

case the surrounding area will eventually return to a normal state. If not deliberately reeled back in, the black path eventually starts to decay, dissipating more quickly where Pattern is strong. On the other hand, if the black path is maintained, and if the controlling forces continue channeling Logrus energy along it, it will tend to expand, sometimes to a mile or two in width, sometimes influencing entire Shadows.

Other black channels.

A dark thread lay upon the wide sill. He reached out and touched it as he launched himself.

There came a great rushing of wind as we fell downward, moved forward, rose. Towers flashed past, wavering. The stars were bright, a quarter-moon just risen, illuminating the bellies of a low line of clouds. We soared, the castle and the town dwindling in an eyeblink. The stars danced, became streaks of light. A band of sheer, rippling blackness spread about us, widening. The Black Road, I suddenly thought. It is like a temporary version of the Black Road, in the sky. I glanced back. It was not there. It was as if it were somehow reeling in as we rode. Or was it reeling us in?

The countryside passed beneath us like a film played at triple speed. Forest, hill and mountain peak fled by. Our black way was a great ribbon heaving before us, patches of light and dark like daytime cloud shadows sliding past.

Prince of Chaos

A Black Thread, as opposed to a Black Road, is cast out as a pathway for flying creatures.

Another possibility is the casting of a Black Canal, which follows waterways through Shadow, and provides safe



passage for aquatic creatures of Chaos. Even more exotic are Black tunnels (underground passages), black conduits (energy channels for disembodied creatures of Chaos), and black infernos (based on passage through molten rock).

Black channel defenses.

"Is the path itself giving you any trouble?" I asked.

"No," he replied. "It's nothing at all like those stories I'd heard about the Black Road. It looks a little bleak at times, but nothing's really threatened us." He glanced downward and chuckled. "Of course it's only a few feet wide," he added, "and this is the broadest it's been, so far."

"Still," I said, opening my senses and studying its emanations with my Logrus sight, "I'd think something might have threatened."

"I guess we've been lucky," he said.

Again, Nayda laughed, and I felt foolish. The presence of a ty'iga would count as surely as my own in offsetting the dire effects of a Chaos roadway in the realm of Order.

Prince of Chaos

Having made the black channel comfy, the next step is to keep out the riff-raff. After all, why run a perfectly good Chaos roadway through Shadow if it's going to turn into a highway for the local bums and transients? The next thing you know, you can hardly get from one Shadow to the next what with the traffic and congestion.

No, any Logrus Master with a little foresight will make sure that their black roads are unpleasant for creatures of Order. A mood of gloom and foreboding usually fills the black road, and the local Flora will tend to shift unpleasant features like prickles, clinging vines and poison nettles. For example, local grass tends to ensnarl whatever it touches, simultaneously generating a low-level electric field that numbs muscles and nerves. Noxious gasses and acidic pools will also form, if the wrong kind of travellers remain on the road.

Of course, the black road will turn off its negative effects in the presence of authorized travellers. Lords of Chaos, Logrus Masters, demons and most creatures of Chaos will have no problems. Shape Shifters can usually find a form that will be acceptable to the black road.

Manipulating a black channel.

"I do not believe that he can reach you at the moment. On the other hand, he was able to reach me."

"Why?"

"He did not use a Trump. He does not have one for me. He used a reverberation effect of the black

road, similar to the means by which Brand once escaped Corwin."

*Dara, talking about Oberon,
Sign of Chaos*

Since a Logrus cable runs along any black channel, those with the right kind of power can exert a degree of influence or control. Though the power is usually that of the Logrus, it's also possible for someone with high Psyche to contact the Logrus cable.

Once in touch, information about who might be travelling the black channel, about its destination, or even about the character who summoned it up, can likely be accessed. While changing the course of a black channel is pretty difficult, it's not hard to use it to deliver messages, or change its treatment of certain travellers.

BROKEN PATTERN

"For the record, how many useful images are there?"

"Useful?"

"They must degenerate from shadow to shadow. Where do you draw the line and say, 'Beyond this broken image I will not risk breaking my neck'?"

"I see what you mean. You can work with perhaps the first nine. I've never gone farther out. The first three are best. The circle of the next three is still manageable. The next three are a lot riskier."

"A bigger chasm for each?"

"Exactly."

Knight of Shadows

One big decision for every Game Master is deciding the real nature of Broken Patterns. Are they the remnants of Brand's bloody vandalism? Perhaps Broken Patterns were there all along, as poor copies of the real thing, reflected in Shadow, and only as defective as the images of Amber that contain them.

Could it be that the imperfections in Broken Pattern, gradually worsening as they recede from Amber, are caused by the gradual influence of the Abyss?

On the other hand, maybe all the Broken Patterns are failed experiments, each one of Dworkin's early attempts at creating the Pattern of Amber.

For that matter, could Broken Patterns be images of the Pattern that are laced with the corruption of the Logrus? If so, would there be Broken Patterns near the Courts of Chaos that are actually images of a Crippled Logrus?

Whatever the decision, however a campaign's universe is designed, the composition of Broken Pattern has far-reaching consequences. For example, are there only a

handful of Broken Patterns? Or are they virtually infinite in number? Is the most degenerate Broken Pattern one that's almost a copy of the Logrus, or the Abyss? After all, it's possible that way, way, way out in Shadow, just before the Rim, there might be cryptic scribbles on a wall, or faint scratches on a rock, or the weave in a rug, that mark the final degeneration of Pattern in the universe.

Broken Patterns and Shadows of Amber.

In all likelihood the first reflection of the Pattern is located in a place very much like Castle Amber, with a Pattern which looks almost, but not quite, whole. It's even possible that the Castle, City and Forest would be good imitations of Amber and Arden. The more distant the Broken Pattern, the less the surrounding Shadow will resemble Amber. Each of the Shadow Ambers may be inhabited. If so, their denizens will likely include copies of Amberites, ruled by Shadows of Oberon, or Eric, or Corwin, or even Brand.

Broken Pattern and Amberites.

"Why are you giving me all this esoteric information?"

"You're a higher-level initiate, so it doesn't matter..."

Merlin & Jasra, in Knight of Shadows

The power of Broken Pattern is rarely threatening to those who are initiates of Amber's Pattern. For example, bringing the Pattern to mind is an absolute defense against any attack from Broken Pattern.

As far as walking the lines of a Broken Pattern, anyone imprinted with Amber's Pattern should be able to do so easily, temporarily smoothing out the flaws and cracks as they're crossed. In most cases, this kind of Pattern walk doesn't change the Broken Pattern, and does no harm to the character. And, once at the center, if one is willing to trust the cracked abilities of the Broken Pattern, teleportation is available. Not recommended, but available.

Another possibility is for an Amberite to walk the Broken Pattern along the flaws, as an initiate of Broken Pattern. For most, at least those with Amber or better Attributes in Psyche and Endurance, it's not even challenging.

Still, as the character makes the walk, the Broken Pattern will attempt to impose its image, trying to turn the Amberite into one of its a Broken Pattern Initiates.

Resisting the fractured image is easy, since it's so inferior to the real thing. However, there are times when an Amberite might want to accept the change, voluntarily downgrading from Pattern to Broken Pattern. For one thing, it would make for a nifty disguise. For another, given a bit of instruction, and a few days of practice, the Amberite could effectively operate as an Adept—a sometimes handy thing for a Sorcerer.

Advanced Pattern and Broken Pattern.

Those with Advanced Pattern, once having had a chance to examine a Broken Pattern, will be able to evoke it at will. There's not much that an Advanced Pattern Master can do with a Broken Pattern that they can't do better with Amber's Pattern, but it is an option, and sometimes it makes for an interesting deception.

As to whether an Advanced Pattern character could erase a Broken Pattern, or have it swallowed up into Amber's Pattern, or otherwise manipulate it, that requires a bit of experimentation.

Broken Pattern and Logrus Masters.

It's no great effort to use the Logrus against someone with Broken Pattern. A tendril of the Logrus can easily sweep aside any tendril or projection created by Broken Pattern.

With the image of the Logrus brought to mind, it's also easy to walk the flaw of any Broken Pattern to its center. The Logrus will prevent the image of the Broken Pattern from infecting the mind, but the Logrus Master can still order a (probably inaccurate) teleport from the Broken Pattern.

Attempting to destroy a Broken Pattern with Logrus is considerably more dangerous. It's not that the Logrus doesn't have the power. A decent Logrus Master could either manipulate the cracks, expanding and enlarging them and thereby erasing the Broken Pattern, or simply summon the destructive energies of Primal Chaos. However, since all the Broken Patterns are fed by the Primal Pattern, the Pattern itself would see such an attack as an attempt by the Logrus to seize more Pattern-influenced Shadow. A Broken Pattern suddenly energized and defended by Primal Pattern could be quite hazardous to a Lord of Chaos.

Broken Pattern and Trump Artists.

Concentrating on any Trump card or image is usually an effective defense against tendrils or other attacks from Broken Pattern. Any competent Trump Artist can create a Trump sketch or card of a Broken Pattern, understanding that each Broken Pattern is different from all the others.

Attempting to use a Trump image as protection, while walking either the lines or the cracks of a Broken Pattern, isn't a very good idea. While it may protect the character from being imprinted with the Broken Pattern's image, it doesn't offer any protection against the energy of the lines, nor does it guarantee that the character won't fall through a flaw.

Broken Pattern and Shadow Dwellers.

Anyone with a Psyche of Chaos Rank or better can walk along the cracks to the center of a Broken Pattern in reasonable safety. For characters of Chaos or Human Rank Psyche, or those who want to become initiates, this will do the trick. If a character has a Psyche of Amber or better,

it's possible to resist the image of the Broken Pattern, effectively turning down the opportunity to become an Initiate.

Repairing Broken Patterns.

It wanted me to repair this particular image of itself, to mend this Broken Pattern, by walking it, bearing the Jewel of Judgement with me. This was how Oberon had repaired the damage done to the original. Of course, the act had been sufficiently traumatic to kill him...

Knight of Shadows

Did Merlin, carrying the Jewel of Judgement along the lines, "repair" the Broken Pattern? Or destroy it, by merging it into the Pattern of Amber? The answer varies according to the cosmology of the campaign.

It's also important to note that Merlin was coached, guided, and manipulated by the Primal Pattern all the way up to, and through, his walk of a Broken Pattern. What qualifications, and equipment (such as the Jewel of Judgement) will be necessary for a repeat of Merlin's actions is unknown.

A Final Caution.

As described above, most characters will find nothing very threatening about Broken Pattern. Just remember that these weaknesses of Broken Pattern apply when all other things are equal. If a powerful character, or Construct, or unknown force, is behind a Broken Pattern, things could well be a bit more difficult. For example, an Amberite walking a Broken Pattern might find it hazardous if some hidden Psyche were influencing things, either steering them toward a fall into a crack, or attempting to supplant their normal Pattern image.

CASTLE AMBER

Through a fresh screen of dust I had a symmetrical view into Brand's quarters; rather than a jagged opening in the wall the archway stood perfect and entire, the wall intact at either hand and above. The wall to my right also seemed less damaged than it had been earlier.

I moved forward and ran my hand along the curve of stones. I inspected plastered areas, looking for cracks. There were none. All right. The stone had borne an enchantment...

Knight of Shadows

Perhaps Castle Amber bears some self-repair enchantment. It could be that the Pattern itself keeps the Castle under repair. Or maybe there are pixies living in the walls...

Aside from discovering that the building can repair itself, and that a loose step on the stairs to the dungeon has annoyed Gérard, there's also the odd charming detail revealed in the Merlin Saga; that blind fish swim in a pool, right in the chamber of the Pattern.

Another of the Castle's newly revealed features is the Corridor of Mirrors. This hallway moves itself from place to place within the Castle, sometimes leaving altogether. Merlin can recall "my younger self passing this way," suggesting that the Corridor of Mirrors may wander all the way out to the Courts of Chaos or, indeed, that the Corridor may originate out by the Logrus.

Along with Tir-na Nog'th, the Corridor of Mirrors may be another one of those places where characters can wander off into other universes, other versions of Amber, or even into the region of dreams. As to this last, remember that Merlin seemed to slip into a dream from the Corridor of Mirrors, and he also visited the Corridor of Mirrors from a dream.

All of these things, plus the necessary reconstruction in the wake of the recent destruction (you'll recall that a meeting of the Logrus and the Pattern left a large, multi-level hole in Castle Amber), should get Game Masters thinking about new possibilities...

CORWIN'S PATTERN

First drawn by Corwin as a act of desperation, as a defense against the Storm front generated by Oberon's repair of Amber's Pattern. It is more than just Corwin's creation, it is also his child.

Defenders of Corwin's Pattern.

"I feel—stronger," Luke announced, later. "Yes, I'll help guard this place. It seems a good way to spend some time."

"There won't be any problems yet," Corwin said. "Neither Power knows exactly how to approach it or what to do with it. It's too strong for Amber's Pattern to absorb, and the Logrus doesn't know how to destroy it."

"Sounds pretty easy, then."

"There will probably come a time later, though, when they will try to move against it."

"Until then, we wait and watch. Okay. If some things do come, what might they be?"

"Probably ghosts—like ourselves—seeking to learn more about it, to test. You any good with that blade?"

"In all modesty, yes. If that's not good enough, I've studied the Arts, as well."

"They'll fall to steel, though it's fire they'll bleed—not blood. You can have the Pattern transport you outside now, if you wish. I'll join you in a few moments to show you where the weapons are cached, and the other supplies..."

Prince of Chaos

In Corwin's absence, his Pattern has come up with a new set of defenders. It started with its very own Pattern-Ghost of Corwin, not the ephemeral thing usually made by the Logrus or the Primal Pattern, but more of a partner.

Since then, Corwin's Ghost has recruited the Pattern-Ghosts of Deirdre and Luke, so that each is dependent on Corwin's Pattern.

Merlin has also protected Corwin's Pattern, even when it was threatened by a Logrus-generated earthquake.

Corwin's Pattern has also been a sanctuary for Coral. Since the Jewel of Judgement was put in her eye socket, she's been kidnapped by forces from both Amber's Pattern and the Logrus.

In addition, Dalt, Luke (the real one), Nayda-the-ty'iga, and Jurt (who was accepted as Corwin's Pattern's sole defender at one time) all have some interest in protecting Corwin's Pattern.

Still, given the nature of the threats against it, Corwin's Pattern is a long way from safe...

Threats to Corwin's Pattern.

"I think it's a menace," she said. "It has to be explored and dealt with."

"A menace? Why?"

"Amber and Chaos are the two poles of existence, as we understand it," she said, "housing as they do the Pattern and the Logrus. For ages there has been something of an equilibrium between them. Now, I believe, this bastard Pattern of your father's is undermining their balance."

"In what fashion?"

"There have always been wavelike exchanges between Amber and Chaos. This seems to be setting up some interference."

"It sounds more like tossing an extra ice cube into a drink," I said. "It should settle down after a while."

She shook her head. "Things are not settling. There have been far more shadow-storms since this thing was created. They rend the fabric of Shadow. They affect the nature of reality itself."

"No good," I said. "Another event a lot more important along these lines occurred at the same

time. The original Pattern in Amber was damaged and Oberon repaired it. The wave of Chaos which came out of that swept through all Shadow. Everything was affected. But the Pattern held and things settled again. I'd be more inclined to think of all those extra shadow-storms as being in the nature of aftershocks."

"It's a good argument," she said. "But what if it's wrong?"

"I don't think it is."

"Merle, there's some kind of power here—an immense amount of power."

"I don't doubt it."

"It has always been our way to keep an eye on power, to try to understand it, to control it. Because one day it might become a threat..."

Fiona & Merlin, in Blood of Amber

A short list of those who threaten Corwin's Pattern might include:

The Primal Pattern itself.

The Logrus.

Every Amberite and Lord of Chaos who seeks power.

Plus, if Coral is still there, all who desire the Jewel of Judgement.

There are probably others, but that should get you started in the right direction. Suffice to say that all of Corwin's Pattern's known defenders, including Corwin himself, may find themselves in serious trouble.

All in all, a wonderful Game Master opportunity.

THE COURTS OF CHAOS

There was movement along the black road, a dark column heading out toward the citadel. Gossamer strands drifted between us; there were a few sparks at the far end, about the nighted hulk. Overhead, the sky had completely reversed itself, with us beneath the darkened half. Again, I felt the strange feeling of having been here long, long ago, to see that this, rather than Amber, was the true center of creation...

Corwin, in *The Courts of Chaos*

The center of things.

Consider the following argument.

Because Pattern is static, one Pattern can be different from another. There can be many Patterns.

On the other hand, the Logrus is movement and change. Over time, the Logrus is all configurations, eventually in the eyes of eternity, it encompasses every possible twitch of its constituent parts. By definition, then, there can be only one Logrus.

Or maybe not.

Since the Logrus has a personality, even if it is a personality that constantly changes and shifts, then there may be more than one version of the Logrus. Not based on different designs, but rather a different personae, with different aims and objectives, for each variation.

The Politics of Chaos.

"You're not next in line for the throne," he said.

It being my turn to laugh, I did.

"I already knew that," I said. "You told me not that long ago, over dinner, how long the line was before me—if someone of my mixed blood could be considered at all."

"Two," he said. "Two stand before you."

"I don't understand," I said. "What happened to all the others?"

"Dead," he replied.

"Bad year for the flu?"

He gave me a nasty smile.

"There has been an unprecedented number of fatal duels and political assassinations recently."

Mandor & Merlin, in *Prince of Chaos*

There was a time when it looked like the Courts of Chaos would be some stuffy old kingdom, safe from Amber-style in-fighting and back-stabbing.

Whew! What a relief.

It turns out that the Courts of Chaos are, if anything, even worse than Amber. Not only is there a throne to fight for, with factions battling on every side, but the position of Lord in every Noble House is worth killing for. It's enough to put send a Game Master into cackles of glee.

Any player character Chaos Lords are in for even more trouble than their Amber cousins. They're likely to be

stalked by assassins (some of them of the demonic persuasion), manipulated by whole generations of elder relatives, caught between conflicting loyalties imposed on them by different Houses, and treated as hated obstacles by all their younger relatives.



How time works in the Courts.

...we were transported, arriving at the inward edge of the Plaza at the End of the World, where a blue sky darkened above a conflagration of mourners milling along the route the procession would take. We passed among them, in hope of being seen by as many as possible. I was greeted by a few old acquaintances. Unfortunately, most wanted to stop and talk, not having seen me for some time. Jurt had similar problems. Most also wondered why we were here, rather than back at the Thelbane, the massive, glassy needle of Chaos far to our rear...

Prince of Chaos

Their version of time is geared toward the changing of the colors in the sky. A "day" is a turning, the full rotation of the colors. A quarter-turning from redsky comes white-sky, then bluesky, then purplesky, and back to redsky.

THE CULT OF AMBERITE WORSHIP

"It is a shrine," she said, "dedicated to the spirit of a member of the royal house of Amber."

"Yes, it's my father Corwin," I agreed. "That's what I'm looking at. But what am I seeing? Why should there be such a thing here in the Courts, anyway?"

She moved forward slowly, studying Dad's altar.

"I might as well tell you," I added, "that this is not the only such shrine I've seen since my return."

She reached out and touched the hilt of Grayswandir. Searching beneath the altar, she found a supply of candles. Removing a silver one and screwing it into the socket of one of a number of holders, she lit it from one of the others and placed it near Grayswandir. She muttered something while she was about it, but I did not make out the words.

When she turned back to me again she was smiling.

"We both grew up here," I said. "How is it that you seem to know all about this when I don't?"

"The answer is fairly simple, Lord," she told me. "You departed right after the war, to seek an education in other lands. This is a sign of something which came to pass in your absence."

She reached out, took hold of my arm, led me to a bench.

"Nobody thought we would actually lose that war," she said, "though it had long been argued

Noble Houses of Chaos.

Since the Houses of Chaos are numerous, Game Masters are encouraged to invent their own, and to give any Chaos player character the freedom to fill in details.

Each House should have at least one set of Ways, divided up into specialized byways. Again, Chaos player characters should be encouraged to design their own Ways and/or byways, complete with vistas into various Shadows, specialized chambers for sleeping, eating, reading, etc., defenses and servants, and even hidden secret ways.

The only names that have been filled in so far are House Chanicut, House Helgram (Dara's father's House), House Hendrake, House Jesby, and House Sawall. There may also be a House Minobee (perhaps the House of Duchess Belissa Minobee's father), and even a House Barimen (recall that Dworkin's last name was Barimen). The Royal House of Swayvill is also mentioned, though with King Swayvill dead, it may no longer be Royal, or even a House.

that Amber would be a formidable adversary." We seated ourselves. "Afterwards, there was considerable unrest," she continued, "over the policies that had led to it and the treaty that followed it. No single house or grouping could hope for a deposition against the royal coalition, though. You know the conservatism of the Rim Lords. It would take much, much more to unite a majority against the Crown. Instead, their discontent took another form. There grew up a brisk trade in Amber memorabilia from the war. People became fascinated by our conquerors. Biographical studies of the royal family sold very well. Something like a cult began to take shape. Private chapels such as this began to appear, dedicated to a particular Amberite whose virtues most appealed to someone."

She paused, studying my face.

"It smacked too much of a religion," she went on then, "and for time out of mind the Way of the Serpent had been the only religion in the Courts. So Swayvill outlawed the Amber cult as heretical, for obvious political reasons. That proved a mistake. Had he done nothing it might have passed quickly. I don't really know, of course. But outlawing it drove it underground, made people take it more seriously as a rebellious thing. I've no idea how many cult chapels there are among the Houses, but that's obviously what this is."

Gilva & Merlin, in Prince of Chaos

Consider what it must have been like. To be a Lord of Chaos, unchallenged in the universe, member of the greatest kingdom ever known, and to be defeated by... what? A handful of barbarians? Here's how it might have been:

The two looked away from the scrying pool. Their eyes met, briefly, then young Lord Jan'roth's looked away, flushed, confused.

"What have I seen?" he said, "is this truth? That the host of the Courts of Chaos should be defeated? Or is it some vision?"

"It is truth," said the ancient Sage, Lord of the Ways of Vaarin. "Amber triumphs. Even in their moment of greatest weakness, their Pattern disrupted by the attempt at repair, their greatest mages, Oberon and Dworkin, absent from the battle. In our land. And still they won."

"Why? Why, old man?" The young Lord reached for his sword, then let his hand fall away. "Why did we lose?"

There was no reply.

"I have always been told," said Jan'roth, squatting down in misery, "that we are numerous, while they are few. That we of the Courts are united, while they bicker amongst themselves."

"True," said the Sage.

For a time they again looked at the Pool of Scrying, seeing the surviving Lords and their troops surrendering.

"Show me, Vaarin, show me the last time."

"The last time?"

"Yes, the battle in the Valley of Garnath. The battle that was to give us Amber."

Wordlessly, the Sage passed his talons over the pool. A different battle raged silently.

"There!" Jan'roth pointed. "See? Their leader fell. Eric was slain. The battle, the war, should have been ours."

"Strange," the old Sage rustled his leathery wings, "now that I think on it. Eric was the only Lord of Amber killed, in all the war. One Lord of Amber, to countless of our number."

"Yet he was their leader. When they lost him, they should have fallen."

"Youngling, I think you have seen it right."

"What do you mean?"

"These Amberites. They have no leader. One may wear a crown, but none of them truly stands above the others. When Eric died, they thanked him for his sacrifice, and for the terrible dying curse that he laid upon us, and continued on."

"Our leaders said it was only a small setback, that loss."

"Yes, they spoke of how we were overextended. How taking the battle to the foreign land weakened us. How the surprise, and at this he pointed as beast-riders were swept from the sky by bursts of automatic rifle fire, "could never be repeated..."

"You think they spoke falsely?"

"No. Yes. I don't know." The Sage gestured over the pool once again, erasing the past. The battlefield at the edge of the

Abyss returned, and the viewpoint zoomed toward a pinpoint of red light.

"This time, they said, this time everything was in our favor." Young Jan'roth gripped the hilt of his weapon, "It is our homeland we tried to defend. They come to our place of strength. There could be no surprises..."

"Attend!" the Sage interrupted, pointing.

In the pool appeared a cluster of Amberites.

"I see," the youngster cried, "Corwin! He who opened the Way! And that's Brand, our champion! What is he holding..."

"The Eye of the Serpent!"

"What? Amberites with the lost Eye of the Serpent! How can this be?"

"Like gods..." the Sage seemed to wither within his scales, "they must be more than we..."

Worshipping the Winners.

There's an interesting parallel between the Courts of Chaos, defeated by Amber, and the Japanese people after World War II.

Before the War, the Japanese were convinced of the divinity of their race, the Yamato, believing that it was their destiny to rule the Earth. Japan, so they thought, could be subservient to no nation, and this reasoning led to the Japanese military's assault on Pearl Harbor. Which, in turn, unleashed the fury of the United States. The result, the defeat of Japan, and its subsequent occupation by U.S. forces, was a strong object lesson. Obviously the ways of the West were better, and should be studied. The Japanese adopted many of the ways of the United States, prospered economically, and continue a fascination with western culture. Their attitude adjustment has been going on for almost fifty years, and shows few signs of weakening.

The same kind of thing may be happening in the Courts of Chaos, where shrines to Amberites are just the first stage in a cultural revolution.

Or Maybe Not...

The setup was similar to that of my father's, with a groined vault containing a light source superior to the candles. Only there was no painting above this altar. This one featured a stained glass window, lots of green in it, and a little red.

Its principal was Brand.

Prince of Chaos

Merlin speculates that the Amberite chapels might be "sinister," or that they might be "used to try to influence the individuals involved..." After all, Corwin was kept a prisoner in his shrine. Even more interesting is that Brand's Chapel featured a pentagram that might be used for summoning.

Imitating Amberites, Literally.

There is another explanation for the Amberite shrines.

Consider the roots of the Lords of Chaos. They are, before anything else, Shape Shifters. They learn from an early age to adapt their bodies to their ever-changing environment. And for Lords of Chaos, it's impossible to gain real power, such as the Logrus, without being able to Shape Shift.

As good Shape Shifters, they respect a superior form.

Perhaps the shrines are not so much a matter of worship, as of identification. In a shrine it becomes possible to focus on the positive traits of an Amberite, to commune with an Amberite's Psyche, and to learn more of their nature.

The better to imitate Amberites. The better to Shape Shift toward the victors. With Amberites not as gods, but as templates.

Existing Shrines.

"I recall a social visit to the Ways of Hendrake one time," he said, "when I wandered into a small, chapel-like room. In a niche in one wall there hung a portrait of General Benedict, in full battle regalia. There was an altar-like shelf below it bearing several weapons, and upon which a number of candles were burning. Your mother's picture was there, too..."

Mandor, in Prince of Chaos

There are known to be Shrines for Benedict, Brand, Corwin and Fiona.

For example, House Hendrake seems to have adopted Benedict. Not surprising, since he is the undisputed Master of Arms. There might also be an element of ancestor worship. Benedict's shrine in House Hendrake is filled with weapons and armor. As Gilva demonstrated, a part of the Benedict worship rite involves touching a sacred sword, and invoking purification.

It's easy to imagine that Caine might also have been chosen. Like the Norse god Loki, or the American Indian Coyote god, Caine is seen as a trickster. His faked death and surprise reappearance at the end of the war are seen as evidence of his guile, and of his sense of humor. Unlike those of the other Amberites, shrines to Caine are also found among the lower classes of the Courts of Chaos.

Some other possibilities are Shrines for Bleys, regarded as a Dionysian merry-maker, and Gérard, as representative of strength and a symbol of loyalty. Julian, revered for his coldness and his self-control, might also be regarded as a hunter-spirit, lord of the woods, and of the hounds, and of nature.

THE EYE OF THE SERPENT

—KNOWN IN AMBER AS THE JEWEL OF JUDGEMENT

Dworkin felt that I had been protected from the Pattern during our confrontation, when I had gone back to check on the figure I had seen, because I was wearing the Jewel. I could not keep wearing it for too long, though, because this also had a tendency to prove fatal. He decided that I must become attuned to the Jewel—as were my father and Random—before I let it out of my possession. I would thereafter bear the higher-order image within me, which should function as well as the Jewel in defending me against the Pattern. I could hardly argue with the man who had supposedly created the Pattern, using the Jewel. So I agreed with him...

Knight of Shadows

"Bloody Eye of Chaos!" is what Mandor said, when he laid eyes upon the Jewel of Judgement, and Nayda, as the *ty'iga*, called it "The left eye of the Serpent!"

If this is truly the source of the Jewel of Judgement, we'll have to give a little more credit to Dworkin. After all, stealing the eye right out of the Serpent of Chaos is one gutsy piece of work. In Amber terms, it would be on the order of stealing the Unicorn's horn.

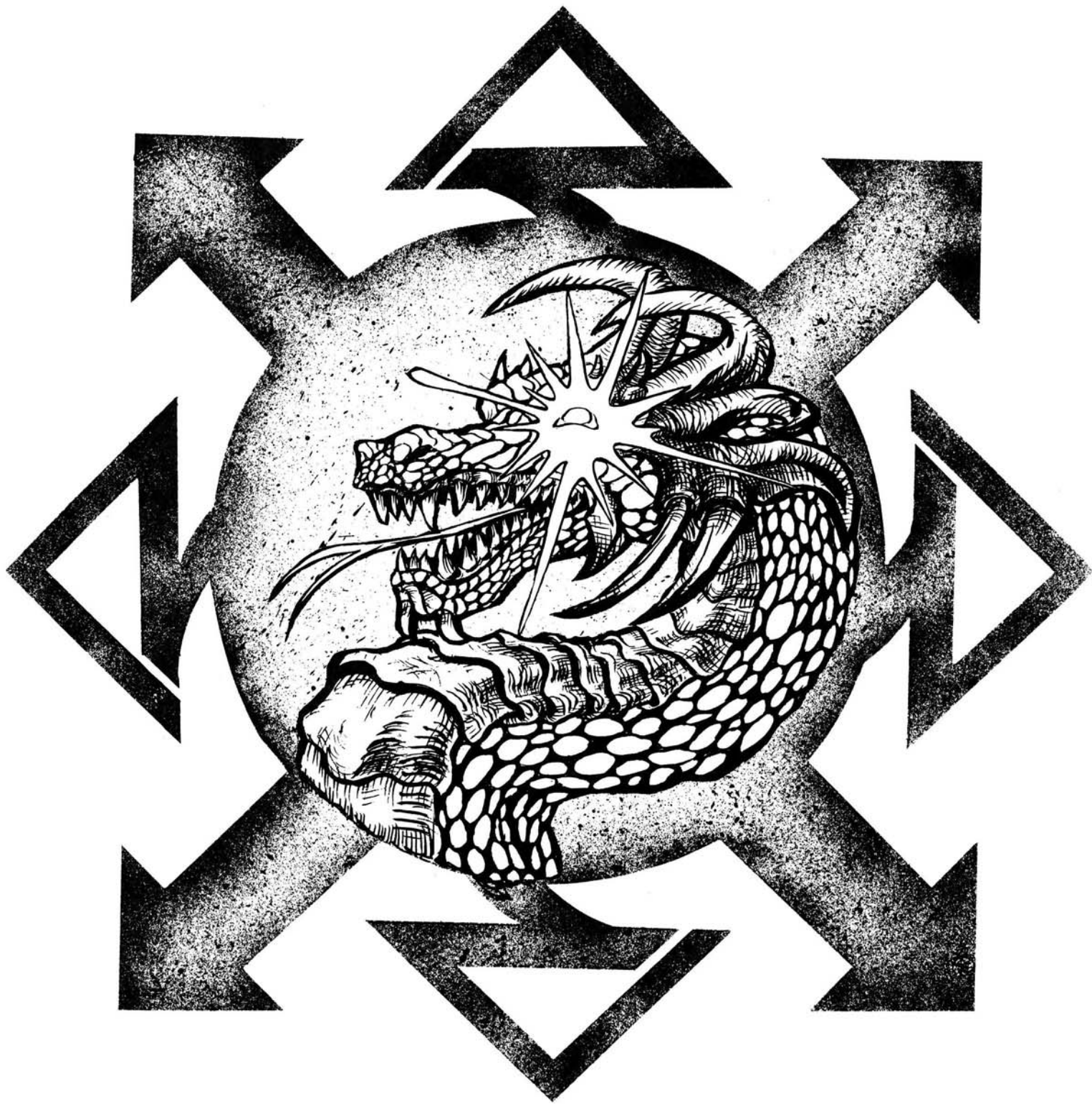
All this would be interesting enough if the Eye were attached to its chain, and in the possession of King Random. Which it isn't.

No, the Eye of the Serpent is an eye once more.

When Coral was injured in the explosion between the Logrus and the Pattern, Dworkin came along to "repair" the damage. Which he did by surgically implanting the Jewel into Coral's eye socket.

This has led to all kinds of interesting consequences, including kidnapping attempts upon Coral by forces of the Logrus and by the Primal Pattern itself. In addition, Coral seems to be "seeing" out of the Eye, perceiving things in a cosmic way. She's also used it offensively at least once.

When we last saw Coral, she had found sanctuary at Corwin's Pattern. What she'll do now is anybody's guess.



Attunement to the Eye of the Serpent.

I set the Jewel on a nearby table.

After about a half minute I realized that I had braced myself against the Pattern's death stroke. I relaxed my shoulders. I drew a deep breath. I remained intact. Could be that Dworkin was right and the Pattern would leave me alone. Also, I should be able to summon the Pattern in the Jewel now, he told me, as I do the Sign of the Logrus. There were Pattern-magics which could only be wrought via this route, though Dworkin hadn't taken the time to instruct me in their employment. He'd suggested that a sorcerer should be able to figure the system out. I decided that this could wait. I was in no mood just now for commerce of any sort with the Pattern in any of its incarnations...

Knight of Shadows

There seems to be even more advantages to Attuning than previously thought.

First off, if bearing the image of the three-dimensional Pattern is truly a protection against the Primal Pattern of Amber, the Jewel of Judgement is going to be even more valuable for Corwin's Pattern and its defenders.

As to the possibility of Pattern-magics, it's likely that Dworkin deliberately kept any system information from Merlin. The reason being that the most efficient way of performing magic through the three-dimensional Pattern is idiosyncratic. In other words, a Sorcerer's own invented system will work better than any system learned from someone else.

One other thing about the Eye of the Serpent. When Merlin attempts to Attune himself a second time (more on that below, in the section on the spikards), a voice issued forth, refusing him the "higher initiation."

Given that one acquires a three-dimensional image of the Pattern when first attuned to the Jewel of Judgement, it's interesting to speculate on what might lie beyond. Is there a four-dimensional image? Or can a character get an insight into the Logrus on the second run? Another speculation is that the higher attunement gives a character the ability to summon Pattern-ghosts from the Jewel...

THE FOUNT OF POWER

"The Fount of Power, man. There's a steady, pulsing source of pure energy inside the Citadel, you know. Inter-Shadow stuff. Comes from the four worlds jamming together there."

"I know. I've seen it in action."

"I've got a feeling that this Mask is still in the process of getting a handle on it."

"He had a pretty good grip when we met."

"Yeah, but there's more to it than plugging into a wall outlet. There are all sorts of subtleties he's probably just becoming aware of and exploring."

"Such as?"

"Bathing a person in it will, if he's properly protected, do wonders for strength, stamina, and magical abilities. That part's easy for a person with some training to learn. I've been through it myself. But old Sharu's notes were in his lab, and there was something more in them—a way of replacing part of the body with energy, really packing it in. Very dangerous. Easily fatal. But if it works you get something special, a kind of superman, a sort of living Trump."

"I've heard that term before," Luke..."

"Probably," he replied. "My father undertook the

process, with himself as the subject—"

"That's it!" I said. "Corwin claimed that Brand had become some sort of living Trump. Made it almost impossible to nail him..."

*Luke & Merlin,
in Sign of Chaos*

The Fount of Power is the fast track to a lot of power.

It's likely that the basic version of the initiation just raises a character's Attributes to Amber Rank, and gives them a good grip on any other powers they might have.

As for the more drastic stage, the elevation to a "Living Trump," that's more of a judgement call. There should be across the board improvements in Attributes, along with a major increase in the sheer power that the character can use (although no particular increase in skill).

The big question, for every Game Master, is whether the benefits of the Fount of Power are temporary or permanent.

If, as Luke describes, characters just have a lot of energy crammed into them by the Fount, it may be a temporary thing. Either they'll be dependent on maintaining some kind of link with the Fount of Power, or they'll have to return every so often to get refreshed.



Limited Charges.

Interesting that Jurt doesn't overuse his "Broadcast Trump" ability in his later encounters. The first two times Jurt fights as a "Living Trump," in the final confrontation between Merlin and Mask at the Fount of Power, and in the fight where he steals Werewindle from Luke, Jurt flashes in and out almost constantly.

It's almost as if Jurt has figured out that he's got only so many "charges," or so many Trump jumps, before he'll have to go back to the Fount for a refill. Take a look at the various versions of Jurt in the character section and see the different ways that the powers gained from Fount of Power might be handled.

Side-Effects of The Fount of Power.

"...How much do you know about the process?"

"Oh, I know most of it, in theory. I wouldn't mess with it, though. I think it takes away something of your humanity. You don't much give a shit about other people or human values afterward. I think that's part of what happened to my father."

Merlin & Luke, in *Sign of Chaos*

Another way to look at it is in terms of undeserved, or unpaid for, powers. After all, new powers, especially useful new powers, should cost points.

So if a bath in the Fount is effective, does good things for the character, and doesn't have any serious drawbacks, the character should pay for the privilege.

In other words, assign Bad Stuff to cover the cost of the Fountain's power.

Dependency on The Fount of Power.

"A person who acquires that kind of power also picks up a vulnerability, by way of its source," he said.

"What does that mean?" I asked.

"Specifically, I don't know," he told me. "But the power in the Keep can be used against a person who is empowered by the Keep. I learned that much in Sharu's notes. But Mom took them away before I read them all, and I never saw them again. Never trust—that's her motto, I think."

"You're saying...?"

"I'm saying that if something happens to me and he comes up a winner in this game, I believe she knows some special way of destroying him."

Luke & Merlin, in *Sign of Chaos*

This, of course, is the real drawback of using the Fount

of Power. It really doesn't matter how much power is available, if the controller of the Fount has the ability to cut off the tap, or spike the flow, or even reverse it, so as to drain the character of even more than what they'd had originally.

Puppets of The Fount of Power.

...I saw that Jasra stood with her back to the tower of fire, her arms upraised. Streaks of sweat lined her face zebra through a mask of soot, and I could feel the pulsing of the forces which passed through her body. About ten feet above her, face purple and head twisted to one side as if his neck were broken, Sharu hung in the middle of the air. To the untutored he might have seemed magically levitated. My Logrus sight gave me view of the line of force from which he hung suspended, however, victim of what might, I suppose, be termed a magical lynching.

Knight of Shadows

Jasra, as controller of the Fount of Power, and mistress of the Keep of Four Worlds, is brutal about maintaining her control.

She's already enslaved Sharu Garrul, making him into a guardian of the Fount. She's not likely to be shy about doing it again.

Any character who accepts the power of the Fount is also likely to come under her control. Hopefully player characters will be cautious enough to avoid the following:

"...and swear to serve me," I overheard Jasra saying.

Sharu's lips moved.

"And swear to serve you," he gasped.

She lowered her arms slowly, and the line of force which held him began to lengthen. As he descended toward the Keep's cracked floor, her left hand executed a gesture similar to one I had once seen an orchestra conductor employ in encouraging the woodwinds, and a great gout of fire came loose from the Fountain, fell upon him, washed over him, and passed on down into the ground. Flashy, though I didn't quite see the point...

His slow descent continued, as if someone in the sky were trolling for crocodiles. I discovered myself holding my breath as his feet neared the ground, in sympathetic anticipation of the eased pressure on his neck. This, however, did not come to pass. When his feet reached the ground, they passed on into it, and his descent continued, as if he were an occulted hologram. He sank past his ankles and up

to his knees and kept going. I could no longer tell whether he was breathing. A soft litany of commands rolled from Jasra's lips, and sheets of flame periodically separated themselves from the Fountain and splashed over him. He sank past his waist and up to his shoulders and slightly beyond. When only his head remained visible, eyes open but unfocused, she executed another hand movement, and his journey into the earth was halted.

"You are now the guardian of the Fount," she stated, "answerable only to me. Do you acknowledge this?"

The darkened lips writhed.

"Yes," came a whispered reply.

"Go now and bank the fires," she ordered. "Commence your tenure."

The head seemed to nod at the same time it began sinking again. After a moment only a cottony tuft of hair remained, and an instant later the ground swallowed this, too. The line of force vanished.

I cleared my throat. At the sound Jasra let her arms fall and turned toward me. She was smiling faintly.

"Is he alive or dead?" I asked, and then added, "Academic curiosity."

"I'm not really certain," she responded. "But a little of both, I think. Like the rest of us..."

Knight of Shadows

GHOSTS

"Just what is a Pattern-ghost?" I said.

"An artifact created by the Pattern. It records everyone who walks it. It can call us back whenever it wants, as we were at one of the times we walked it. It can use us as it would, send us where it will with a task laid upon us—a geas, if you like. Destroy us, and it can create us over again..."

Merlin & Deirdre's Ghost,
in Knight of Shadows

What a great innovation!

Now a Game Master can role-play more than just one version of any Amberite, or any Lord of Chaos. Plus the added feature of being able to bring back a favorite NPC again and again...

Stabilizing Ghosts.

Normally a ghost must be supported by regular doses

of energy. Without a refill, depending on local conditions, most ghosts will fade after a few hours. However, a Pattern-Ghost created by Amber's Pattern could be supported by Corwin's Pattern, and vice versa. Whether a Logrus-Ghost could be supported by the Pattern, or a Pattern-Ghost by the Logrus, remains to be seen.

Pattern-Ghosts can gain some independence if given blood from an Amberite. A Logrus-Ghost needs to drink the liquid fire of a being of Chaos to survive. Whether blood can sustain a Ghost temporarily or indefinitely is unknown, although it probably varies according to the local environment.

A ghost that wishes to survive long term is going to have to do some experimenting. It could be that the blood is the basis for a ghost to regrow its body. On the other hand, it may take more elaborate, or more arcane, means for a ghost to become flesh.

Partial Ghosts.

"You are the last of the Logrus-Ghosts to confront me."

"Indeed," he replied.

I took another step.

"Yet," I observed, "if you are a reconstruction of myself from the time I made it through the Logrus, why should you oppose me here? The self I recall being in those days wouldn't have taken a job like this."

His grin went away.

"I am not you in that sense," he stated. "The only way to make this happen as it must, as I understand it, was to synthesize my personality in some fashion."

"So you're me with a lobotomy and orders to kill."

"Don't say that," he replied. "It makes it sound wrong, and what I'm doing is right. We even have many of the same memories."

Merlin & Merlin's Logrus-Ghost,
in Knight of Shadows

The more powerful the ghost, the more likely it is to recognize its own condition, and the more likely it is to follow its own mind, rather than minding the instructions of its creator.

Considering that a ghost would have to be based on someone who managed to get through the Logrus or the Pattern in the first place, you're dealing with a pretty impressive crowd. It pretty much means that all potential ghosts are too powerful to control.

So what is a poor power to do?

One possibility is to choose the youngest and most inexperienced characters. They're less likely to recognize their ghost state, and are therefore much easier to

manipulate. That may be why Jurt and Luke were chosen as ghosts.

It's just that young and inexperienced ghosts are seriously lacking in power and guile.

That leaves the possibility of creating partial ghosts, crippled versions of the original. It's a tricky business, since leaving out the wrong part of a ghost may prevent it from functioning properly. Or being able to stand up.

Editing a ghost's personality, leaving out the memories and experiences that might distract it from its task, and leaving in only those that would incline the ghost toward its assignment, seems to be the way the Pattern and the Logrus operate. Of course, all this leads to the speculation that the Pattern and the Logrus are perfectly capable of recreating fully functional clones, but they chose to only create ghosts...

Ghosts as Player Characters.

Every so often the Game Master is faced with a Bad Stuff overload situation. Sometimes the player just bid too much in an Attribute Auction. Other times the player character may have been a bit too greedy, and not too concerned with the consequences.

Either way, a ghost player character could be considered a balance for a few points of Bad Stuff (just how many would depend on how hard the campaign universe treats ghosts).

Although it's possible to role-play the player through the character's death, that's not necessarily the best approach. After all, the ghost is only going to remember life up to and including the last Pattern walk or assay of the Logrus. It's much more interesting if the player character were faced with the mystery of their own death, as well as the problem of surviving as a ghost.

To soak up even more Bad Stuff, it could turn out the ghost player character isn't alone. The original character is still alive, an NPC, and not too happy about sharing a name and/or space with a clone.

Just a suggestion...

Other Powers, Other Ghosts.

So far we've seen Pattern-Ghosts and Logrus-Ghosts. That's a start, and it reveals the basic requirements for building a Ghost, but there's no reason why other Powers couldn't invoke Ghosts.

Since each Trump image contains the vital essence of the character depicted, it might be possible to pull a duplicate out of a card. An Advanced Trump Artist, for example, might be able to contact the "first image," a Ghost that remembers nothing past the time of the Trump's original creation.

Likewise, each drop of a Shape Shifter's blood contains the character's genetic code, effectively a map for reconstructing a complete duplicate. The only drawback to creating a clone from a drop of Shape Shifter's blood is that it would have almost none of the memories of the original character—actually, that might be considered an

advantage, depending on the motivation for creating the clone.

One other way of getting a "Ghost" is in Shadow. After all, there are always an infinite number of Shadows of any character wandering around. Caine found one, and killed it, to use as his corpse. In fact, he may have pulled this trick more than once...

GHOSTWHEEL

"It riffles through Shadow like the pages of a book—or a deck of cards," I said. "Program it for whatever you want checked out and it will keep an eye on it for you. I was planning it as a surprise. You could, say, use it to determine whether any of our potential enemies are mobilizing, or to follow the progress of Shadow-storms, or—"

"Wait a minute," he said raising a hand. "How? How does it flip through shadows that way? What makes it work?"

"In effect," I explained, "it creates the equivalent of a multitudes of Trumps in an instant, then—"

Merlin & Random, in Trumps of Doom

Capable of showing up anywhere, anytime, as a sparkle, a bit of light, a ring, a shiny bracelet, or even a "gold-leaf calligraphed letter O..." Ghostwheel is more than just a device. It has become an interesting character.

By the end of Merlin's Saga, his creation had become a true contender for title of "Third Power" in the universe. Consider that Ghostwheel, which had already started with Pattern and Trump abilities, and a very safe refuge out in Shadow, managed to pick up an attunement with the Jewel of Judgement and the imprint of the Logrus. It also managed to thumb its nose at both the Logrus and the Pattern, defying each one at one time or another.

The questions remain. What has the Ghostwheel become? What are its ambitions?

Maybe, like so many other fictional computers before it, Ghostwheel aspires to humanity. It may be seeking a way of creating itself in a human body, perhaps initially as a Trump-Ghost.

Or Ghostwheel might seek to become the symbol of the power of Trump. In which case, it might eventually be necessary for all Trump Artists to somehow "walk" Ghostwheel before receiving the power of Trump.

On the other hand, if Ghostwheel inherited Merlin's hunger for power, it may have even larger ambitions. After all, now that it has taken on the great powers it may feel itself ready to replace them.

Finally, consider that the following speculations, voiced by Merlin, may simply have been premature, but not inaccurate...

I unearthed my Amber Trumps and dealt myself the one off the bottom. It showed a silver wheel against a dark background. I passed it to Random and he studied it.

"How do you use it?" he asked.

"Same as the others. You want to call it to you?"

"You do it," he said, "I want to watch."

"Very well," I answered. "But while I've set it to gathering data across the shadows it still won't know a whole lot that's useful at this point."

"I don't want to question it so much as I want to see it."

I raised the card and stared, seeing through it with my mind's eye. After a few moments, there was contact. I called it to me.

There followed a small crackling sound and a feeling of ionization in the air as a glowing wheel about eight feet in diameter materialized before me.

"Diminish terminal size," I ordered.

It shrank down to about a third of what it had been and I ordered it to halt at that point. I looked like a pale picture frame, occasional sparks dancing within it, the view across the room constantly rippling as seen through its center.

Random began to extend a hand.

"Don't," I said. "You might get a shock. I still don't have all the bugs out..."

Random & Merlin, in *Trumps of Doom*

LOGRUS & PATTERN AT WAR

"Both the Pattern and the Logrus are sentient," he said. "We've both seen evidence of that. Whether they are manifestations of the Unicorn and the Serpent or the other way around makes no real difference. Either way, we are talking about a pair of greater than human intelligences with vast powers at their disposal. Whichever came first is also one of those useless theological points. We need only concern ourselves with the present situation, as it affects us."

Mandor, in *Prince of Chaos*

The fact that the Logrus and the Pattern are at odds, and that they are sentient beings, is pivotal to the design of any campaign based on the Merlin Saga. There is a long game, dotted with ancient mysteries, and one that even elder Amberites only see in fragments. From the point of view of the two great powers, the Logrus and the Pattern, everyone is a pawn. They play their game, each seeking to extend its dominion beyond the borders of the other, and each seeking allies from among their initiates.

Taking the side of the Pattern.

"Consider. Choosing between the Logrus and myself is not a mere matter of politics—of selecting this person or that to do a particular job. My adversary and I represent two fundamental principles by means of which the universe is organized. You may tag us with nouns and adjectives from most languages and dozens of disciplines, but we represent, basically, Order and Chaos—Apollonian and Dionysiac, if you like; reason and feeling, if you prefer; madness and sanity; light and dark; signal and noise. As much as this may seem to indicate it, however, neither of

us seeks the others's extinction. Heat death or fireball, classicism or anarchy, each of us proceeds along a single track, and without the other it would lead to a dead end. Both of us know this, and the game we have played since the beginning is a far more subtle thing—ultimately, perhaps to be judged only esthetically.

"Now, I have gained a significant edge over my ancient adversary, for the first time in ages. I am in a position to produce a historian's dream throughout Shadow—an age of high civilization and culture such as shall never be forgotten. If the balance were tipped the other way we would be contemplating a period of upheaval at least on par with that of an ice age. When I spoke of you as game pieces it was not to minimize your roles in this. For this is a time of great fluidity. Stay with me, and I will guarantee the Golden Age of which I spoke, and you a part in it. Leave, and you will be snatched away by the other. Darkness and disorder will follow. Which would you have?"

The Primal Pattern,
in *Prince of Chaos*

The Pattern is persuasive. If characters have concern for the multitude of shadow dwellers, all those uncounted innocents, then surely they must have some sympathy for the Pattern's side. Besides, from the point of view of most Amberites, it's simply patriotism.

Taking the side of the Logrus.

"...Your story of the girl Coral, asking the Pattern to send her to an appropriate place is a case in point. What did it immediately do? It sent her to a Shadow Pattern and turned out the lights. Then it sent you to rescue her, repairing that edition of itself in the process. Once it was repaired it was no longer a Shadow Pattern, but another version of itself which it was then able to absorb. It probably absorbed that entire shadow as well, adding considerably to its own energies. Its edge over the Logrus increased even more. The Logrus would need a big gain to restore the balance after that. So it risked an incursion into the Pattern's domain, in a desperate effort to obtain the Eye of Chaos. That ended in a stalemate, though, because of the intervention of that bizarre entity you call Ghostwheel. So the balance remains tipped in the Pattern's favor, an unhealthy state of affairs."

"For the Logrus."

"For everybody, I'd say. The Powers will be at odds, the shadows in turmoil and disorder in both realms till things have been righted."

"So something should be done to benefit the Logrus?"

"You already know that."

Mandor & Merlin,
in *Prince of Chaos*

That the Logrus has been steadily losing ground is pretty obvious. The ancient loss of the Eye of the Serpent, the creation of Corwin's Pattern, the debacle of the Patternfall War, not to mention the recent consumption of a Broken Pattern by Amber's Pattern, have all contributed to its downfall.

It's especially difficult for any Lord of Chaos to avoid actively taking the side of the Logrus. Not to support the Logrus is to betray one's homeland.

Taking the Middle Ground.

"...I can tell you only this: Trust not the Pattern, nor the Logrus either, nor any of their spawn, till this matter be settled."

Corwin,
in *Prince of Chaos*

As most anyone from either side will tell you, a complete victory, where either the Pattern or the Logrus triumphs, would be a very bad thing. The universe depends on balance.

Still, knowing that balance is desirable, and trying to stay out of the conflict, often means going it alone. For a time, both the Logrus and the Pattern may court your favor, but they'll also try to coerce you into joining up.

An even more dangerous tactic is actively trying to maintain the balance of power. This usually means jumping sides, going over to support the loser whenever either the Logrus or the Pattern gets the upper hand. Obviously, this isn't going to make you very popular with patriots on either side, and those you just abandoned may well decide that you are the worst kind of traitor.

In other words, supporting the balance may be noble, but it's also foolhardy.

RETAINERS OF AMBER

by Mark Jason Durall

"I will oppose him from hell to eternity, and I will not cease until one of us is dead. What say you to this, old retainer?"

And he took my hand and kissed it.

"Hail to thee, Corwin, Lord of Amber," he said, and there was a tear in his eye.

Nine Princes in Amber

There are always those who rule in Amber, the elder Amberites, and those who serve. Their retainers fill functions high and low, maintaining everything from battle readiness to the shine of the silverware. While the names here are taken from the books, the characters and their descriptions are a matter of speculation. Each Game Master should feel free to interpret them in their own way, and to recruit others to the list.

Baron Bayle.

...I poured some of the yellow wine into my glass and took a sip: a distinctive taste I remembered from across the years. It was okay for quaffing. Baron Bayle owned a number of vineyards about thirty miles to the east. He was the official vintner to the Court, and his red wines were generally excellent. He was less successful with the whites, though, and often wound up dumping a lot of second-rate stuff onto the local market. It bore his emblem and a picture of a dog—he liked dogs—so it was sometimes called Dog Piss and sometimes Bayle's Piss, depending on who you talked to. Dog lovers sometimes take offense at the former appellation...

Blood of Amber

Official Vintner to Amber, and a highly respected noble loyal to the Crown, Baron Bayle's family crest bears a hound's head surrounded by vines, reflecting the two loves of the Bayles: dogs and wine. The Bayles are among the richest families in Amber, and own a large estate in the City, in addition to their ancestral home Arbor House, some thirty miles to the east of Mount Kolvir. Bayle influence in the area is imprinted on the landscape itself, with names like Baylesport and Baylecrest. The Baron himself is a stout man in his sixties, with cheeks and nose red with veins, head crowned by a magnificent mane of white hair. His eyes are dark and piercing, and he is still strong enough to lead soldiers into battle should Amber call.

Another generation of the Bayle family now involves itself with the Amberites, in the person of Vinta Bayle, the Baron's third daughter, who became Caine's latest mistress.

Lord Chantris.

Head of the second oldest family in Amber, Lord Chantris and his line have always been staunch supporters of the Crown and Oberon. They have been in the front lines of his battles, and they followed his children to the Courts of Chaos in battle against the forces of the Black Road. Chantris' family is known for their skill in horse breeding, and Eric's horse Drum was a gift from Lord Chantris. Their standard is a red horse on a field of gold, above three crowns.

Chantris himself is tall and thin, pale-skinned and blue eyed. His nose is exceedingly long, a trait unfortunately shared by most of his family. He stares intensely when spoken to, as if pulling words from the speaker's mouth by sheer force of will. It is difficult to feel comfortable around him, though he is never rude or less than gracious. He speaks in an archaic form of Thari, and his dress is formal, all in gold and grey. He wears a silver skull-cap, and bears a

thick twisted staff set with a cap of gold upon either end.

In battle, Chantris is formidable. Though he is no slouch as a fighter, his main skill comes from his ability to visualize the battle, collate information from many sources and find weaknesses in his opponent's strategies and exploit them fully. He is one of the few mortals that has beaten Prince Benedict of Amber in chess, and Benedict respects his judgement in matters martial. His Warfare is significant, probably ranking above most player characters.

Lord Danesh.

Head of the Amber Guard, the regiment of soldiers charged with keeping Castle Amber safe for the noble family. He is loyal to the current King, whoever that might be, and his prime concern is in keeping the castle safe. He bears Corwin some ill-will, as that Prince was the only one to lead forces against the Castle, but feels that his imprisonment was ample punishment. His duties are to see to the safety of all the Amberites inside the castle and, in some part, the city, a task made both difficult and unnecessary by the Amberite's truculent natures and their vast physical abilities. His nickname is "Black Lion," which he pretends to dislike but regards with some pride.

Danesh prefers to be clad in black and gold, and wears a hauberk of chain-mail. Danesh is thick-bodied and blond, with a short beard and brown eyes. Armed with a broadsword and a dagger, he is skilled with most weapons. He takes his nickname from the helmet which he always carries (often forgetting that it is in his hand and gesturing with it) which is a Greek-style helmet with a Y-shaped visor, fringed with the mane of a black lion.

Dik.

On the surface, Dik seems like a left-over from another age. Ancient and sentimental, he's most often seen doing small cleaning chores. He looks the part of the aged retainer, tall and stooped, white haired and usually in grey smock and trousers. He has been with the Castle for as long as any of the Amberites remember. Given half a chance he'll reminisce about Oberon and "the good old days, back when people knew respect," but mostly he just says "eh?"

As it turns out, there's nothing wrong with Dik's hearing. Dik follows all the Castle gossip, including the comings and goings of the elder Amberites.

Droppa.

Court Jester to the Royal Family of Amber, Droppa MaPantz is more than a little vulgar, and often more than a little drunk. He supplements much of his material from Shadow Earth comedians. No one is sure exactly why Oberon gave the position to Droppa, because he rarely laughed at the man's jokes. Droppa is a traditional entertainer in the medieval sense. He juggles, does pantomime and slapstick, and his jokes are frequently crude or insulting. Merlin claims that Droppa is partial to

routines stolen from George Carlin. Droppa is a regular in a Las Vegas casino, a place where Random accompanies him to indulge in his passion for playing cards and other forms of gambling. By tradition, the Court Jester has always enjoyed immunity from those angered by his wit, and this applies to Droppa as well.

Droppa is short, thick-set, and wears loud clothing. He has red hair and chain smokes, and his face is usually flushed red with strong drink. He's also an excellent guide for newcomers to Amber, readily providing introductions to drinking establishments, restaurants and whatever low dives happen to be popular.

Lord Feldane.

Head of one of Amber's once-great families whose fortunes have seen an unfortunate turn since Oberon's first disappearance. Centuries ago it was among the richest families in Amber, but the House of Feldane now exists mostly on momentum. The manor house is in a state of disrepair, and the extensive holdings have been leased to tenant farmers. Unlike many nobles who have seen hard times, Feldane has not sold any relics or family heirlooms, and continued to try to give the impression of wealth, often when doing so meant meager rations for himself and his servants. The greatest remaining asset now is the Feldane library, perhaps the best in Amber. Although somewhat disorganized, with many volumes so old as to be in danger of becoming dust, there are magical grimoires, and scrolls written by Dworkin that pre-date *The Book of the Unicorn*. The Feldanes always had a scholarly bent, with a scroll on their coat of arms.

That Tujurane Ibold Elfant Feldane the Fourth would become one of the heroes of the Patternfall War was surprising to just about everybody, including Feldane himself. He had held the belief that his line would probably end with him, despite the fact that he is a relatively young man. Growing up in the shadow of impressive ancestors, and ignored in the turmoil of Eric's reign, he just never thought much of his own chances. Were it not for the war, and his surprising competence as a military man, he and his entire line would probably have faded to obscurity.

Not that's he's turned into a social lion. A genuinely humble man, Tujurane is still rather awkward in social situations. Feldane appears to be in his thirties, with short curled blonde hair and a wide, honest face.

His armor, traditional for his family, is of bronze and iron, and quite heavy. He is competent on horseback with a bladed lance or mace, and is an expert with the longbow as well. His Warfare is above Amber Rank, but not by much.

Lord Henden.

Steward and Secretary of Castle Amber and Assistant to the King. A terribly important man, Henden is all too aware of this. Nervous and impatient, he often affects to

be overwhelmed by the responsibilities of his position, which he has been serving excellently for all of his years. He is the bearer of the Royal Seal, and has one of two keys to the royal vault (the other is carried by Random). An expert on the genealogy and history of the Court of Amber, Henden is the one to be consulted if one wishes to know their exact place in the succession. A skilled scribe, he has an encyclopedic memory which he puts to good use in his duties.

Henden is of average size and a little thin, with a slight pot belly. He wears thick spectacles and is robed in grey and gold. At his side is a staff topped with a sphere of amber (the fossilized resin, not the castle), which has a tiny unicorn trapped within. His voice is quick and worried, and he fidgets. He lives in an apartment in the castle with his wife and children.

Lord Karm.

"...there was your uncle Osric, who took on the whole House of Karm over the death of a relative on his mother's side. Oberon was particularly friendly with Karm in those days, too, and Osric offered three of them. Oberon acquitted him at a hearing, though, basing his decision on earlier cases, and he even went further by stating a kind of general rule—"

"Oberon also sent him off to the front lines in a particularly nasty war," I interrupted, "from which he did not return."

Sign of Chaos

The House of Karm was always close to King Oberon. So great were the ties between these Houses that when Prince Osric became angered at House Karm and declared a blood-feud with them, Oberon ruled officially that the prince had a right to do so, but it was not long after that Osric, Benedict, and Finndo were made illegitimate in an annulment of their mother's marriage to Oberon, and Osric and Finndo were sent into a battle in some distant Shadow from which neither returned. Many regard this as coincidence, but few would put it past Oberon to make a decision to keep the realm whole and peaceful at the cost of his own flesh and blood.

Osric's vendetta nearly finished House Karm off, and they are still recovering. The current Lord Karm is quite young, just out of his teens, and not ready for battle. He is an avid reader, head full of romances and popular adventure stories, and wants to be like the Amberites themselves. His family is among the wealthiest of those in Amber, and the women of Karm are thought to be the most beautiful in all of Amber (the royals excepted, out of deference to Princess Florimel). There are even rumors that it was over one of the women of Karm that Osric declared war upon them.

Armars Karm is young and red-haired, brown-eyed, and

thin. His features are sharp, and intelligent, and he is eager to learn and yearns for the experience of life. Were it not for his position as Lord of House Karm, he would make an excellent squire.

Dame Margot.

The Grand Dame of Amber and Mistress of Protocol, Margot is the authority on all things to do with court etiquette. She has instructed many of the Amberites (and their children) in the arts of heraldry, dance, courtesy, manners, poise, charm, sewing, the healing arts, and many other skills.

She is ancient but still beautiful, though she wears her white hair under a veil. Her colors are gold and white. It is likely that Oberon and she enjoyed no small amount of affection in her youth. The truth may remain hidden forever, though the possibility that Margot may be the mother of a secret Prince or Princess of Amber is an exciting one to many who care about such things.

Her duties now include overseeing the next generation of Amberites, and seeing that all things in the castle are impeccable. She is also an expert in the customs of the countries of the Golden Circle, and is on hand for most court functions. Useful as an Ally for those who want to win their way into the Court, and for those who enjoy gossip. Margot regards Florimel as her finest creation.

Michael.

Behind his back, they call him "the second King of Amber." That's due to the fierceness and the authority by which he rules his domain, the extensive kitchens, larders, and pantries which feed the inhabitants of Castle Amber. A master chef, he is also a born organizer with a stern demeanor. Michael strides through the kitchens like a general, demanding that the many cooks, assistants, dishwashers, servers, and bussers do their duties with "a scrupulous attention to perfection." If there is a food substance available in Amber, Michael knows where it can be found at its freshest. He has attended cooking schools in a dozen Shadows, and is an expert in the kitchen to rival Benedict's supremacy with weapons.

Michael is of average height, and keeps his thinning hair bound back in a black cloth (like all the other cooks, a tradition began at Oberon's outburst at finding a hair in his soup). He is fit and lean, and reminds one uncannily of a drill sergeant or high school calculus instructor.

He lives in a chamber off the entrance to the kitchen. Not particularly useful for gossip. He knows who's in the castle by where the private meals go, but he doesn't speak of such things. Ever. An invaluable ally for those who keep odd hours and like to eat regularly.

Sir Randel.

A courtier of Castle Amber, favored by Vialle and Flora. Randel is skilled in all the courtly virtues, an expert dancer, singer, with a special skill with poetry. He is

trustworthy and often used to deliver messages between the nobles and others in the city of Amber. Fairly young, he is distinguished enough to be foremost among the large group of courtiers.

Merlin describes him as "tall, thin, dark, and generally smiling," an accurate description of Randel as any. He wears dark colors, and a black doublet which sets off his mane of curly dark hair. Impeccably dressed, he is modest and sincere, and has a wake of admirers among Castle Amber's servant girls.

He is well practiced with rapier, but has no practical experience in combat. In the Castle he functions as herald and messenger.

Lord Rein.

I remembered Rein as a child. I was already full-grown by then and he was a candidate for court jester. A thin, wise kid. People had kidded him too much. Me included. But I wrote music, composed ballads, and he'd picked up a lute somewhere and taught himself how to use it. Soon we were singing together with voices raised and all like that, and before long I took a liking to him and we worked together, practicing the martial arts. He was lousy at them, but I felt kind of sorry for the way I had treated him earlier, what with the way he had dug my stuff, so I forced the fake graces upon him and also made him a passable saber man. Before long, he became minstrel to the court of Amber. I had called him my page all that while, and when the wars beckoned, against the dark things out of Shadow called Weirmonken, I made him my squire and we had ridden off to the wars together. I knighted him on the battlefield, at Jones Falls, and he had deserved it. After that, he went on to become my better when it came to the ways of words and music. His colors were crimson and his words golden.

Corwin,
in Nine Princes in Amber

A minstrel, knighted by Corwin and now a Lord of Amber. Still friends with Corwin after Eric's banishment, he brought Corwin food and other gifts while he was a prisoner in Amber's dungeons, risking his life for his friend.

Other Positions.

High within Castle Amber might be found the Master of Servants, Keeper of the Stables, Armourer, Weapons Master, Executioner, Torturer, Barber, Seamstress, Castle Gardener, Master Carpenter, etc...

SPIKARDS

..I felt some activity in the vicinity of the spikard, and for the first time I caught it drawing upon one of the many sources it commanded to alter its shape, accommodating the changing size of my finger. It had obviously done this several times before, though this was the first time I had noted the process. This was interesting, in that it showed the device capable of acting independent of my will.

I didn't really know what the thing was, what its origin might have been. I kept it because it represented a considerable source of power, an acceptable substitute for the use of the Logrus, which I now feared. But as I watched it change shape to remain snug upon my changing finger, I wondered. What if it were somehow booby-trapped to turn upon me at exactly the wrong moment?

I turned it a couple of times upon my finger. I moved into it with my mind, knowing this to be an exercise in futility. It would take ages for me to run down each line to its source, to check out hidden spells along the way. It was like taking a trip through a Swiss watch—custom-made. I was impressed both with the beauty of its design, and with the enormous amount of work that had gone

into its creation. It could easily possess hidden imperatives that would only respond to special sets of circumstances. Yet—

It had done nothing untoward, yet. And the alternative was the Logrus. It struck me as a genuine instance of the preferability of the devil one didn't know.

Prince of Chaos

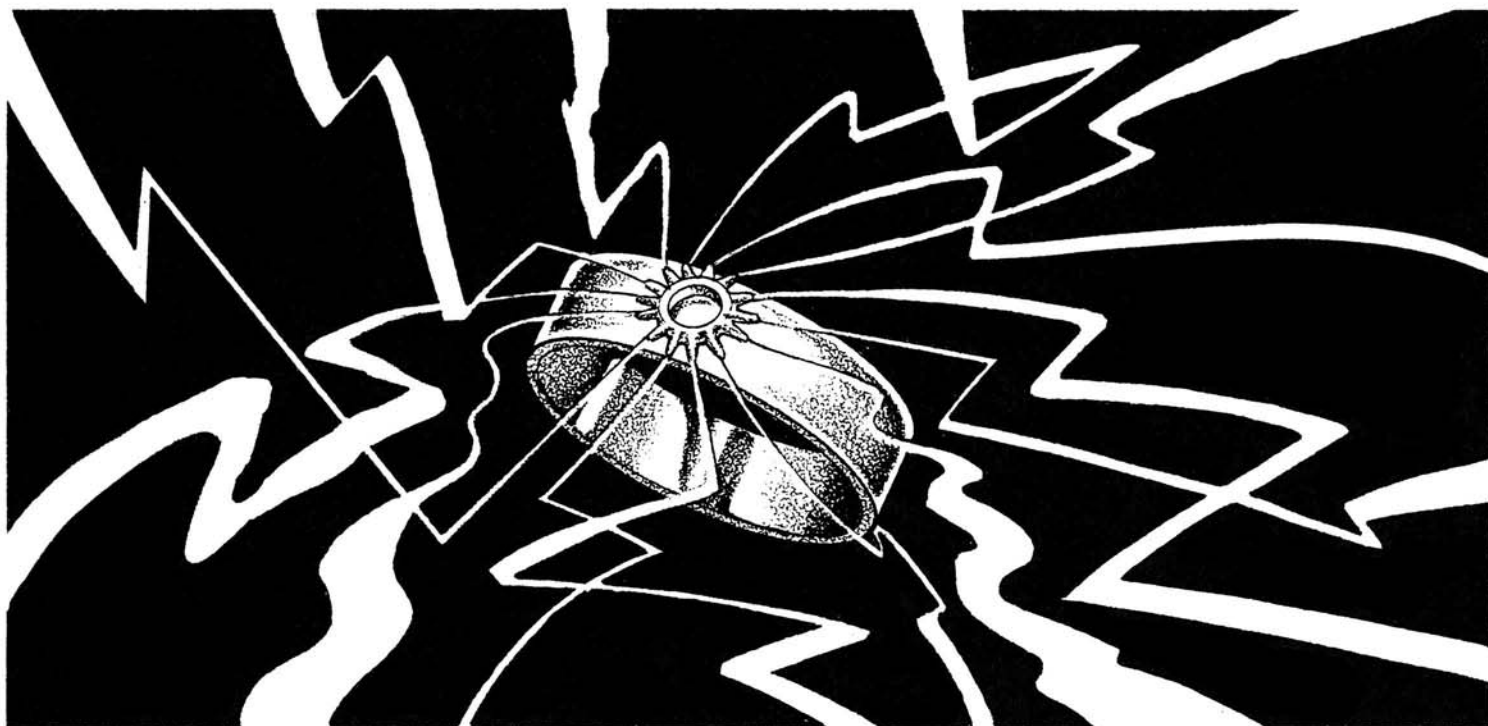
It's the perfect Amber set-up.

Give someone the power they seek, and make it seem like the sacrifices are minimal and temporary.

In other words, the ideal present for any careless player character.

Nor is the power really unlimited. The Logrus shut off the spikard with no problem. As for Pattern, when Merlin tried using the spikard to fry Eric's Pattern-Ghost, he felt as if his arm had been hit, and "A wisp of smoke rose from the spikard..." In other words, every spikard is vulnerable to a direct attack on its ring manifestation. It's possible that any Logrus Master, or Advanced Pattern Master, once they know the secret, could turn off a spikard.

Still, the spikards represent ancient powers. Even though one was supposedly the ring of King Swayvill, as Corwin said, their presence is necessarily disturbing, "adding to the general power of Chaos just by virtue of their presence at this pole of existence."



"That which was hidden becomes known and is moved about," answered Risk.

"Are both Amber and the Courts involved?"

"Indeed," answered Desire, from before me.

"Ancient powers," she said. "How ancient?"

"Before there was an Amber, they were," stated Memory.

"Before there was a Jewel of Judgement—the Eye of the Serpent?"

"No," Memory responded.

She drew a sudden breath.

"Their number?" she said.

"Eleven," Memory replied.

She grew pale at that, but I held my silence as she had instructed.

"Those responsible for this stirring of ashes," she said then, "what do they wish?"

"A return to the glory of days gone by," Desire stated.

"Could this end be realized?"

"Yes," Foresight replied.

"Could it be averted?"

"Yes," said Foresight.

"At peril," Caution added.

"How might one begin?"

"Query the guardians," Head stated.

"How bad is the situation?"

"It has already begun," Head answered.

"And the danger is already present," said Risk.

"So is opportunity," said Chance.

"Of what sort?" Vialle inquired.

There came a sound from across the room as my scabbard and blade slid to the floor from where I had leaned them against the wall. Vialle stared.

"My weapon," I said, "just slipped."

"Name it."

"It was my father's sword, called Werewindle."

"I know of it." Then, "This man, Luke," she said, "there is something about his blade and its sister weapon that figures in all of this. I do not know their stories, though."

"Yes, they are connected," said Memory.

"How?"

"They were created in a similar fashion at near to the same time, and they partake of the powers of which we have spoken..."

Vialle & Luke,
in "The Salesman's Tale"

SWORDS OF PATTERN

It was a long and lovely gold-chased sheath of dark green, and the hilt of the blade which protruded from it appeared to be goldplated, with an enormous emerald set in its pommel. I took hold of it and drew it partway, half expecting it to wail like a demon on whom one has dropped a balloon filled with holy water. Instead, it merely hissed and smoked a little. And there was a bright design worked into the metal of its blade—almost recognizable. Yes, a section of the Pattern. Only this excepting was from the Pattern's end, whereas Grayswandir's was from a point near the beginning.

Knight of Shadows

Add yet another sword to the short list of those engraved with sections of the Pattern. Now we now of Corwin's sword Grayswandir, also called "the Nightblade,"

and Brand's sword Werewindle, also called "the Day-sword." Also recall that Corwin described the tracery of Bley's sword, "...flared with a portion of the Pattern."

If Werewindle starts the Pattern, and Bley's sword is somewhere in the middle, and Grayswandir is at the end, how many more blades are needed to complete the Pattern? Is there any power in collecting them together? For all that matter, do they really contain the image of Amber's Pattern, or might it be of some other Pattern?

Both Grayswandir and Werewindle were too important to be left out of Merlin's Saga, even apart from their owners.

Grayswandir appeared at Merlin's side when he most needed it, its Pattern nature balancing the Chaos dagger that had been planted on him. Another Grayswandir appeared, but Corwin's Ghost admitted freely that no copy could ever match the original. By the end of the story the true Grayswandir was once again at Corwin's side.

SUPERNATURAL CREATURES

On the blue-gray ledge above me was crouched a sphinx, also blue—lion body, large feathered wings folded tight against it, a genderless face looking down upon me. It licked its lips and revealed a formidable set of teeth.

"Get on with what?" I asked, raising myself slowly into a sitting position and drawing several deep breaths.

"The riddling," it answered, "the thing I do best."

Trumps of Doom

One of Luke's Trumps of Doom leads to the blue sphinx on a cliff of blue Shadow. The Sphinx is a particularly mysterious, and powerful, supernatural creature.

As is the case with Merlin's encounter, any riddles should be, if at all possible, related to something in the campaign. In other words, it shouldn't be all that important that the players solve the riddle, since the main point is to give them some clue as to a hidden meaning, or a key to one of their problems. If riddles don't come naturally, do a little research. Any decent library will have books of riddles, in the children's section and elsewhere. Remember, it's the character who must solve the riddle, not the player, so the Game Master should feel

free to supply any hints that would be obvious to the character.



UNDERSHADOW

Light values shifted next. The sky grew black, not as night, but like a flat, nonreflecting surface. So did certain vacant areas between objects. The only light left in the world seemed to originate from things themselves, and all of it was gradually bleached. Various intensities of white emerged from the planes of existence, and brightest of all, immense, awful, the unicorn suddenly reared, pawing at the air, filling perhaps ninety percent of creation with what became a slow-motion gesture I feared would annihilate us if we advanced another pace.

Then there was only the light.

Then absolute stillness.

Then the light was gone and there was nothing. Not even blackness. A gap in existence, which might have lasted an instant or an eternity...

Then the blackness returned, and the light. Only they were reversed. Light filled the interstices, outlining voids that must be objects. The first sound that I heard was the rushing of water, and I knew somehow that we were halted beside the spring. The first thing that I felt was Star's quivering. Then I smelled the sea.

Corwin, in *Sign of the Unicorn*

There was no color anywhere about me. Everything was black, white, or some shade of gray. It was as if I had entered a photographic negative. What I presumed to be a sun hung like a black hole several diameters above the horizon to my right. The sky was a very dark gray, and ebony clouds moved slowly within it. My skin was the color of ink. The rocky ground beneath me and about me shone an almost translucent bone-white, however. I rose slowly to my feet, turning. Yes. The ground seemed to glow, the sky was dark, and I was a shadow between them. I did not like the feeling at all.

The air was dry, cool. I stood in the foothills to an albino mountain range, so stark in appearance as to rouse comparison with the Antarctic. These stretched off and up to my left. To the right—low and rolling—toward what I guessed to be a morning sun, lay a black plain. Desert? I had to raise my hand and “shade” against its... what? Antiglow?

Merlin, in *Knight of Shadows*

Merlin, hiding where he was stashed by Ghostwheel, just before he's taken to the underdark, is visited by three ghost-constructs. The first, Dworkin's Ghost, erupts easily with a touch of the Logrus. The second, Oberon's Ghost, explodes with more force, also destroyed by the Logrus, but detonated rather than dissolved. The third, Corwin's Ghost, succeeds in overcoming Merlin, and knocks him out.

When Merlin comes to, he finds himself in a place between Shadow where, according to the Logrus-enhanced Frakir, a personal “trial” is to take place.

The point seems to be forcing Merlin to choose between the Logrus and the Pattern, but in the shrine Merlin is faced with three choices. A dark passage, a light one, and a grey one.

Three doorways. Three ghosts.

That last pattern-ghost, that of Corwin, is later confirmed to be the representative of Corwin's Pattern.

Certainly Oberon's Pattern-Ghost, who seems to know exactly what he is, shows himself to be an incendiary opponent to the Logrus.

Which leaves the Dworkin-Ghost. Which only flares and dissipates when touched with Logrus. Much as we might expect from a Logrus-Ghost. And, if the Logrus wanted to fool Merlin, what other image could it send, but that of an old recording of the pre-Pattern Dworkin?

Regardless of how Merlin arrived, or how many forces were manipulating him, or even if not all the ghosts were really ghosts, the setting is a great one for any campaign.

Characters brought to the Undershadow will be unable to use Trump or any other powers. Evoking any major symbol of power (Logrus, Pattern, etc.) will be either unsuccessful or will result in a temporary visitation by the real thing.

In other words, it's a great equalizer, where characters will have to use the clues they're given, deal with whatever Pattern-Ghosts or Logrus-Ghosts are sent their way, and generally have to feel their way around a giant game board. A neat opportunity for role-playing!

VAMPIRES

I raised my gaze to a lavender-bordered mirror I had not realized hung above the chest. The lady within had long, coal-black hair and eyes so dark I could not tell where the pupils left off and the irises began. Her complexion was very pale, emphasized perhaps by her pink eyeshadow and lip coloring. Those eyes...

"Rhanda!" I said.

"You remember! You do remember me!"

"...And the days of our bonedance games," I said. "Grown and lovely. I thought of you but recently."

"And I felt the touch of your regard as I slept, my Merlin. I am sorry we parted so, but my parents—"

"I understand," I said. "They thought me demon or vampire."

"Yes." She extended her pale hand through the mirror, took hold of my own, drew it toward her. Within the looking-glass, she pressed it to her lips. They were cold. "They would rather I cultivated the acquaintance of the sons and daughters of men and women, than of our own kind."

When she smiled, I beheld her fangs. They had not been apparent in her childhood.

"Gods! You look human!" she said. "Come visit me in Wildwood one day!"

Impulsively, I leaned forward. Our lips met within the mirror. Whatever she was, we had been friends.

Prince of Chaos

A fascinating turn of events...

What role might vampires have in the affairs of the Courts of Chaos, or in the Black Zone, or in Amber? Are they the conventional undead vampires of myth and legend? Or some special race with a different metabolism? Perhaps vampires are just the typical denizens of certain Shadows...



WONDERLAND

...It did not seem all that unusual to be drinking with a White Rabbit, a short guy who resembled Bertrand Russell, a grinning Cat, and my old friend Luke Raynard, who was singing Irish ballads while a peculiar landscape shifted from mural to reality at his back. Well, I was impressed by the huge blue Caterpillar smoking the hookah atop the giant mushroom because I know how hard it is to keep a water pipe lit... Luke was known to keep pretty strange company on occasion...

Sign of Chaos



When Luke was under the influence of hallucinogenic drugs, he found (or created) a strange Wonderland, built of his own dreams and fancies. While part myth and part memory, most of Luke's Wonderland seems drawn from the world of Lewis Carroll's *Alice Through the Looking Glass* and *Alice in Wonderland* (one wonders if it was Brand or Jasra who read nighttime stories to little Rinaldo).

Among his more dreamy creations, Luke also came up with a couple of nightmares; the Bandersnatch and the Jabberwock. Either of these creatures would be an interesting challenge to the fighting skills of an Amberite.



The whole episode suggests good campaign possibilities.

At the very least, Game Masters might want to try out some new quiz questions on their players: "What was your character's favorite fantasy as a child?" and "Describe your character's childhood memories of bedtime, including the room, the toys, the books, and any other rituals."

...A gunmetal snout protruded from between a rock and a shrub; the pale eyes blazed about it; blue saliva dripped from the dark muzzle and steamed upon the ground. It was either quite short or very crouched, and I couldn't make up my mind whether it was the entire crowd of us that it was studying or me in particular. I leaned to one side and caught Humpty by the belt or the necktie, whichever it was, just as he was about to slump to the side.

"Excuse me," I said. "Could you tell me what sort of creature that is?"

I pointed just as it emerged—many-legged, long-tailed, dark-scaled, undulating, and fast. Its claws were red, and it raised its tail as it raced toward us.

Humpty's bleary eyes moved toward my own, drifted past.

"I am not here, sir," he began, "to remedy your zoological ignor—My God! It's—"

It flashed across the distance, approaching rapidly. Would it reach a spot shortly where its running would become a treadmill operation—or had that effect only applied to me on trying to get away from this place?

The segments of its body slid from side to side, it hissed like a leaky pressure cooker, and steaming slaver marked its trail from the fiction of paint. Rather than slowing, its speed seemed to increase.

My left hand jerked forward of its own volition and a series of words rose unbidden to my lips. I spoke them just as the creature crossed the interface I had been unable to pierce earlier, rearing as it upset a vacant table and bunching its members as if about to spring.

"A Bandersnatch!" someone cried.

"A frumious Bandersnatch!" Humpty corrected.

Sign of Chaos

CORAL

Coral, on the other hand, was taller... slender, her hair a reddish brown. When she smiled it seemed less official... I approved of her sensible dark green breeches, heavy coppery shirt, and warm brown cloak. Her boots looked fine for walking, and she had on a dark hat that covered most of her hair. There were gloves and a dagger at her belt.

Sign of Chaos



Gutsy, bold, and as headstrong as any elder Amberite.

She also has the knack of making plans for her future. Without hesitation, Coral followed up her very first Pattern walk with an unexpected twist. Instead of commanding the Pattern, instead of imposing her will upon the Pattern, she said, "I'm going to leave the choice up to the Pattern."

Note though, that her subservience to Pattern was short-lived. It wasn't long before Coral defied the Primal Pattern, refusing both its instructions and its sanctuary.

Coral is perhaps the most well-rounded of all the younger Amberites. As if she were modelling her life on Bleys, she seems to be second best everywhere, and plays with all available powers. For example, by releasing one of Mandor's steel balls, a task even Merlin shied away from, she shows herself to be no slouch in the magic department.

In spite of her talents, and her great heart, Coral seems to have been rushed into the center of things. First Pattern uses her, as a lever, to manipulate Merlin into walking a Broken Pattern. Then, once Merlin has reached a sleeping Coral, the Pattern holds them hostage until they make love. Finally, as if that weren't trauma enough, Dworkin then takes a turn at altering her life.

Injured in the conflict between Pattern and Logrus, Dworkin replaces her right eye, implanting the Jewel of Judgement into Coral's eye socket. So Coral's status changed from low-ranked player to highly-prized piece, in the great game. Kidnapped and rescued, kidnapped and rescued again, it's as if Coral is destined to become a professional victim.

Not for long.

Soon Coral will master her new eye, and her new vision...

CORAL—LAST DAUGHTER OF OBERON (150 POINT VERSION)

"King Oberon supposedly had an affair with my mother before I was born," she said. "The timing would have been right. It was only a rumor, though. I couldn't get anyone to provide details. So I was never certain. But I dreamed it being true. I wanted it to be true. I hoped to find some tunnel that would bring me to this place. I wanted to sneak in and walk the Pattern and have the Shadows unfold before me..."

Coral, in *Sign of Chaos*

Innocent, unworldly, the result of a carefree childhood.

Until you recall that she was raised in one of the most manipulative courts in the Golden Circle, raised in a family for whom medieval politics, with all their double-dealing, back-stabbing and casual assassinations, are taken for granted. After all, would Jasra choose a true innocent as a marriage match, as a *Queen*, for her son?

Compared to an elder Amberite Coral might be considered tame. That's only because the comparison is between a tiger and a dragon.

Coral is startlingly competent. She is, as a true heiress of Amber should be, trained in all things.

Current Objectives.

A moment's respite? A breather? A vacation? Having been assaulted by far too much, far too quickly, Coral wants time to weigh her options.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [1 Point]

STRENGTH = [13 Points]

ENDURANCE = [20 Points]

WARFARE = [26 Points]

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

Power Words [10 Points] - Burst of Magic, Defensive

Luck, Lifeforce, Process Snuff and Process Surge.

Sorcery [15 Points]

GOOD STUFF

[5 Points]

CORAL—LAST DAUGHTER OF OBERON, AND THE JEWEL OF JUDGEMENT

"...And the Queen of Kashifa sees with the Eye of the Serpent."

"I don't know that she sees with it," I said. "She's still recovering from the operation. But that's an interesting thought. If she could see with it, what might she behold?"

"The clear, cold lines of eternity, I daresay. Beneath all Shadow. No mortal could bear it for too long."

Sufuy & Merlin, in *Prince of Chaos*

Attuned to the Jewel of Judgement [10 Points] - As Oberon, Eric, Corwin and Random before her, Coral can use the Jewel to manipulate the weather, to transport herself through Shadow, and as a focus for her mind. When she turned on Jurt, she was using the Jewel as the agent for her will, just as Brand used the Jewel to freeze Benedict in Tir-na Nog'th. Still, she will be in constant danger of being weakened by the Jewel.

CORAL—SURROGATE MOTHER OF PATTERN (200 POINT VERSION)

"Ever since I learned about the Pattern, there's been something I wanted to try if I got this far," she said.

"What might that be?"

"I'm going to ask it to send me where I should go."

"I don't understand."

"I'm going to leave the choice up to the Pattern."

Coral & Merlin, in *Sign of Chaos*

What if walking the Pattern is just a way of getting a wish? The children of Oberon have used that wish cautiously and safely, simply as a means of teleporting themselves.

Coral gave her wish back to the Pattern.

Think about it. What if the Pattern were something like a djinn? Or like a bound demon? Something that felt itself confined, imprisoned? Given a wish, what would it want?

Freedom?

If so, trapped as an inanimate object, its greatest desire might be to become embodied and individual. To be born into the world of men.

So the child that Coral carries is more than an Amber immortal. It may already be the Pattern.

Or the coming babe might not be a suitable host until its birth. Which means the competition between the Pattern of Amber, and the Logrus of the Courts of Chaos, and perhaps even Corwin's Pattern, may be over another prize. It might be that whichever of them holds Coral could become fully human.

Current Objectives.

When she realizes the potential of her child, Coral's priorities will change drastically. It will be obvious to her that the struggles to kidnap her will be just a prelude to the machinations of the Logrus and Pattern regarding her baby. She will want to learn all she can of her situation, but she will also try to cement her alliances. Seeking out Luke, Merlin, and others, she'll want strong promises of support and protection.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [10 Points]

STRENGTH = [24 Points]

ENDURANCE = [30 Points]

WARFARE = [36 Points]

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

Power Words [10 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

CORAL—SURROGATE MOTHER OF PATTERN, AND THE JEWEL OF JUDGEMENT

...She wore a black patch over her eye and was more than a little reactive should my hand stray too near it—or even if I looked at it for too long. What might have led Dworkin to replace the damaged eye with the Jewel of Judgement, I could not even guess. Unless he somehow considered her proof against the forces of the Pattern and the Logrus in their attempts to recover it...

"How does it feel?" I asked her.

"Very strange," she replied. "Not pain—exactly. More like the way a Trump contact feels. Only it's with me all the time, and I'm not going anywhere or talking to anyone. It's as if I'm standing in some sort of a gateway. Forces are moving about, through me."

Merlin & Coral, in Prince of Chaos

Mistress of the Jewel of Judgement [25 Points] - Coral has the ability, though not necessarily the knowledge, required to duplicate some of Oberon's tricks. She can exert her influence on Shadow, and even on some aspects of Amber itself, changing or shaping the nature of reality. She also sees more than the present, so that in the shifting lines of reality she'll sometimes get a glimpse of the past, or the future...

PATTERN'S UNBORN OFFSPRING

"Seems the only way we can get out of here is by making love."

"Thought you'd never ask," she mumbled, eyes still closed.

That made it seem somewhat less like necrophilia, I told myself as I turned us onto our sides so I could get at those coppery buttons. She muttered a little more while I was about things, but it didn't exactly turn into a conversation. Still, her body was not unresponsive to my attentions, and the encounter quickly took on all the usual features, too commonplace to be of much concern to the sophisticated. It seemed an interesting way to break a spell. Maybe the Pattern did have a sense of humor. I don't know.

Merlin & Coral, in Knight of Shadows

Yes, Pattern could have a funny bone, but it's more likely Merlin and Coral were part of a larger plan.

Why?

Well, consider the outcome. Merlin becomes King of the Courts of Chaos. Coral is not only Queen of Kashfa, but also a child of Oberon. Add in Merlin's blood line, as the son of Corwin and great-great grandson of Benedict, and their child might have a stronger claim on Amber than Martin, or any child of Random and Vialle.

In fact, that may be the real reason why Dworkin implanted the Jewel of Judgement into Coral. The question remains, did Dworkin do it to protect Coral's unborn child from tampering by the Pattern? Or so the Pattern would have easy access to the developing fetus?

CORAL—MISTRESS PAWN OF PATTERN

(250 POINT VERSION)

"If there's any sort of way that I can help you, I meant what I said."

"There isn't."

"Don't be so sure. I'm well trained. I'm resourceful. I even know a few spells."

Coral & Merlin, in *Sign of Chaos*

Yes, both the Pattern and the Logrus seem to want her very badly, badly enough to expend a lot of energy in the creation of Construct-Ghosts, and other things. Yet, if the Jewel of Judgement is truly their desire, why is it neither of them speaks of removing the Jewel from Coral?

Maybe because the real prize is Coral herself. Far from an appendage, she has refocused her life and merged with the Jewel of Judgement. Adjusting to this vast new source of power may be the work of a lifetime, but that won't daunt her.

Current Objectives.

The Jewel, and only the Jewel, will be her concern. All of her previous life, including her relationships with Merlin and Rinaldo, will become secondary. In fact, she may come to treat her whole past life as a childhood. Fond memories, yes, but nothing really relevant to the reality she now glimpses through the Jewel of Judgement.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [50 Points]

STRENGTH = [10 Points]

ENDURANCE = [30 Points]

WARFARE = [10 Points]

POWERS

Advanced Pattern Imprint [75 Points]

Power Words [10 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

CORAL—MISTRESS PAWN OF PATTERN, AND THE JEWEL OF JUDGEMENT

And then Jurt screamed as if his soul were on fire. Werewindle moved away from Coral's throat, and Jurt backed off and began jerking, like a puppet whose joints have seized up but whose strings are still being yanked. Coral turned toward him, her back to Luke and me. Her right hand rose to her face. After a time Jurt fell to the floor and curled into a fetal position. A red light seemed to be playing upon him. He was shaking steadily, and I could even hear his teeth chattering.

Knight of Shadows

"Go no further," came an unfamiliar voice, though I realized it to be Coral who was making the sounds. She seemed to have slipped into a trance state. "You are denied the higher initiation."

I drew back on my probe, not eager for any demonstrations that might come my way along it. My Logrus sight, which had remained with me constantly since recent events in Amber, gave me a vision of Coral now fully enfolded and penetrated by the higher version of the Pattern.

Prince of Chaos

Embodiment of the Jewel of Judgement [50 Points] -

Coral not only possesses the Jewel, and is possessed by it, but she has also become imprinted with the three-dimensional Pattern within it. As she comes into her true power, the whole of the known Amber continuum, from the Primal Pattern to the Courts of Chaos, will become like a Shadow to her; just one of an infinite number of possible realities. Just as Amberites can manipulate Shadow dwellers, so Coral will gain immense power over those of Amber and Chaos. Consciously, or otherwise, it becomes a device of her own will, using it as a weapon, a lens, or as an amplifier for her own abilities and powers.

GAME MASTER TIPS FOR ROLE-PLAYING CORAL

...Coral was looking at me from out of the mirror. She had on a peach-colored blouse and was not wearing her eyepatch. The crack in the mirror divided her face down the middle. Her left eye was the green I remembered, her right was the Jewel of Judgment. Both seemed to be focussed upon me.

"Merlin," she said. "Help me. This is too strange. Give me back my eye."

"I don't know how," I said. "I don't understand what was done."

"My eye," she went on, as if she had not heard. "The world is all swarming forces in the Eye of Judgment, cold—so cold!—and not a friendly place. Help me!"

"I'll find a way," I said.

"My eye..." she continued.

Prince of Chaos

Look, it doesn't really matter whether Coral has been handed a bit of power, or the power to twist the universe into a pretzel. Either way, she's stuck with something profoundly disturbing. She's had a horrible injury, the loss of an eye, and it's been followed up by the insertion of an inhuman stone into her head.

It's a nightmare.

Coral has also been betrayed, on several levels. She put her faith in the Pattern, and it stuck her into a trap, forced her into conceiving a child, and then treated her as a tool, as a pawn.

Even so, Coral should come across as trustworthy. Yes, she'll be charming and friendly, with an easy charm and agreeable manner. However, she won't hesitate for a consultation before doing what she thinks is right. Rather than arguing about something she'd wants to do, she'd rather just not mention her plans. Then, when the time is right, she'll charge ahead.

CORAL AS MOTHER

"You've got coffee here?"

"I require it, man. This way." He led us out the door, turned left, headed down a stair. "By the way, Coral seems to be a little bit pregnant, and she says it's yours."

I choked slightly.

"Uhh, I can explain that, Luke..."

Merlin & Luke, in Prince of Chaos

It's not hypothetical. When Merlin last saw Coral, at Corwin's new Pattern, she was carrying his child. It's

possible that a player character could take the role of the kid. Given that Coral may have stepped out to a place where time zips along (for example, Luke had been King in Begma for a month while only a couple of days had passed for Merlin), the character could be full-grown and ready to step into the action.

Constant Allies & Enemies:

Though she is married to Luke, and shares with him the throne of Kashfa, Coral spent her coronation night with Merlin. Childhood friends, and political allies, she has a close relationship with Rinaldo, one that just doesn't go as far as romantic love. On the other hand, though she is attracted to Merlin as a lover, she has a few reasons not to trust him.

Coral also has a complex relationship with Nayda, who has the body of her half-sister, but is now possessed by the demon *Ty'iga*. The change of personality has actually improved their relationship, to the point where Coral now seems inclined to trust Nayda.

Finally, don't forget that Coral has a step-father, Orkuz, who is the Prime Minister of Begma, as well as family and other connections with that court, and perhaps in the court of Kashfa as well.

Another Possible Ally:

My arm felt as if someone had struck it with a baseball bat. A wisp of smoke rose from the spikard. For a moment, my four upright uncles stood unmoving. And my fifth remained supine.

Then, slowly, Eric raised his weapon. And he continued to raise it, as Benedict, Caine and Gérard drew theirs. He straightened as he held it before his face. The others did the same. It looked strangely like a salute; and Eric's eyes met mine.

"I know you," he said.

Then they all completed the gesture, and faded, faded, turned to smoke, and blew away.

Prince of Chaos

When Merlin caught up with Coral, he found that a group of four elder Amberites, headed by Eric, had already halted the kidnappers. Although the Pattern claimed those elder Amberites as its "agents," there may be another conclusion.

Perhaps Eric, who died wearing the Jewel of Judgement, has only died in body, and somehow survives in spirit. It may be that Eric is now part of the living Jewel, and also somehow part of Coral. Eric would become an invaluable ally.

This might also explain why Coral was so reluctant to accept the Pattern's protection. It may be her desire that Eric be brought back to physical form. For that matter, it may even be that Oberon is *not* Coral's father, but that she is the offspring of Eric, or some other elder Amberite.

DALT

...I'd seen him only once, very briefly, via Trump, back at Arbor House. His hair looked golden, or even coppery, by what light there was upon it; but I remembered it as a kind of dirty blond by natural light. His eyes, I recalled, were green, though there was no way I could see that now. I did begin to realize for the first

time, however, that he was pretty big—either that or he had chosen fairly short torchbearers. He had been alone that one time I'd seen him and I had had no standard for comparison. As the light from our torches reached him I saw that he had on a heavy, green sleeveless doublet without a collar, over something black and also heavy, with sleeves that extended down his arms to vanish within green gauntlets. His trousers were black, as were the high boots they entered; his cloak was black and lined with an emerald green that caught our light as the cloak furled about him in shifting, oily landscapes of yellow and red. He wore a heavy circular medallion, which looked to be gold, on a chain about his neck; and though I could not make out the details of its device, I was certain that it bore a Lion rending a Unicorn....

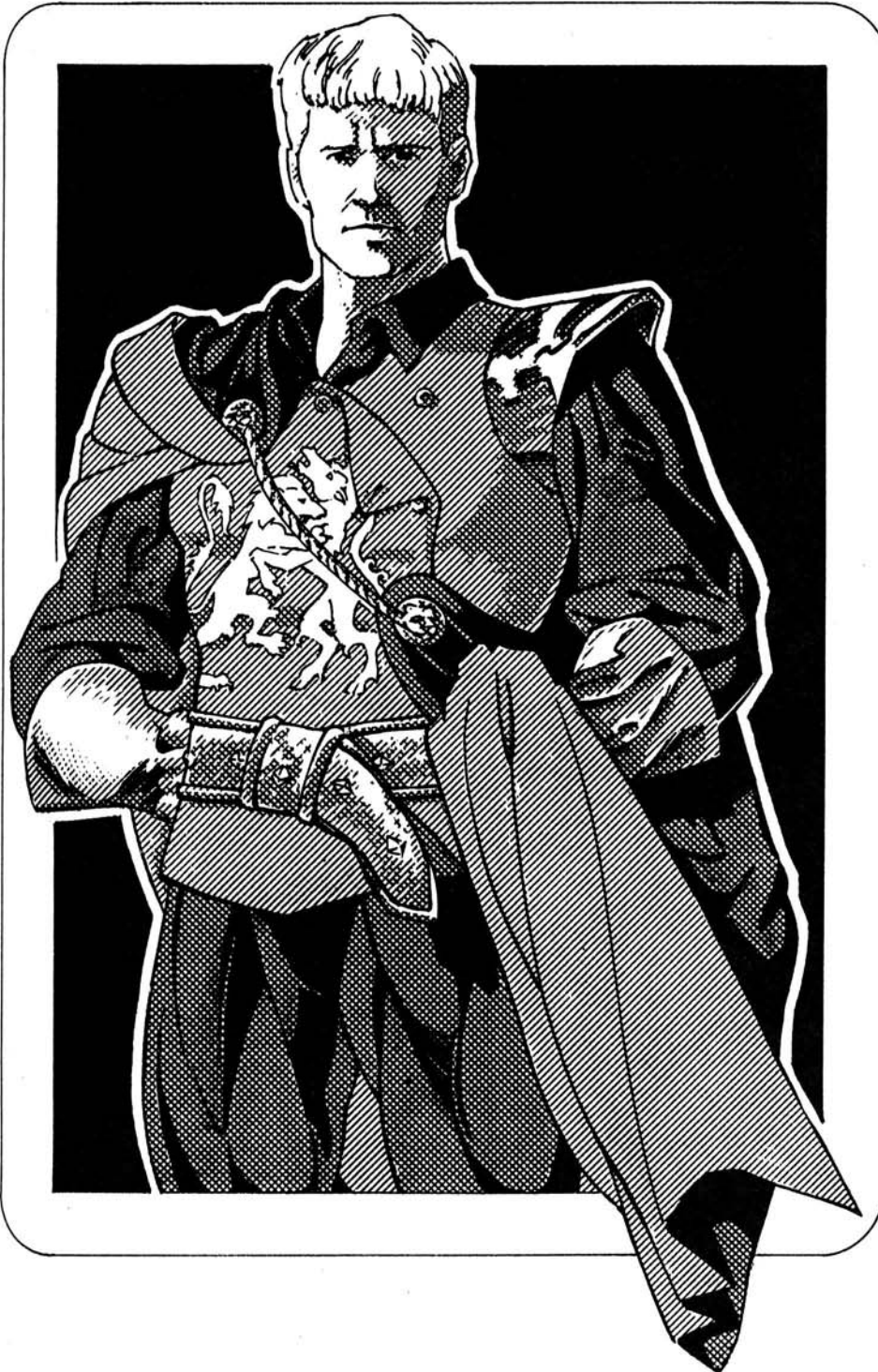
Sign of Chaos

Dalt is one of Amber's bruisers, bucking for a showdown with Gérard, but he's still a pretty young bruiser. In other words, Dalt is going to get his clock cleaned anytime he tries going one-on-one with any elder Amberites.

So why does this guy seem so set on picking fights he can't win?

We are told, as if it were a myth, that Dalt was the offspring of a rape, of Oberon forcing Dalt's mother when she was a prisoner.

The problem is, even though we can believe Oberon capable of rape (after all, Oberon has been pretty casual about lying, cheating, murder, etc.), it's hard to paint Dalt's mother as a saint. Deela was a religious fanatic and a raider, preying on the outlying kingdoms on the periphery of the Golden Circle. Eventually Oberon was pushed into defending his allies. In pretty short order Deela's army was broken, and she was Oberon's prisoner.



As Corwin has been known to say, there are generally two sides to a story. Looks as if we'll never know either side of this story, what with Oberon long gone, and Deela killed by Bleys after she started raiding again. The only thing left is the irrefutable proof that Dalt is a true son of Amber. His walking the Pattern clinched it.

Since his mother's death Dalt has been aching for revenge. He harassed Amber over a period of a few years with little raids, eventually massing enough of an army to launch an attack against Amber itself. He got far enough to attract Benedict's attention. And, to the surprise of most, he survived his wounds.

These days Dalt's standard is the image of a lion rending a unicorn, in green and black. Dalt interprets himself as the lion and Amber as the helpless prey.

Which at least shows Dalt's a healthy imagination.

DALE—ENEMY OF AMBER (200 POINT VERSION)

Every time I'd seen the man, he'd been about something nasty, damn near killing Luke on one occasion. He was a mercenary, a Robin Hood figure out of Eregnor, and a sworn enemy of Amber—illegitimate son of her late liege Oberon. I believed there was a price on his head within the Golden Circle. On the other hand, he and Luke had been buddies for years, and Luke swore he wasn't all that bad. He was my Uncle Dalt, and I'd a feeling that if he moved too quickly the flexing of his muscles would shred his shirt.

Prince of Chaos

Assembling and strengthening his private army, augmented by rifles and ammunition that will work in Amber, Dalt is just biding his time before his next attack.

If possible, he'd like to be presented in the Court of Amber, to take his place among his relatives. He's smart enough to see that lulling the elder Amberites into trust and complacency may be the only way to meet his objective.

As far as Eregnor, Dalt's homeland, is concerned, having Luke as King of Kashfa works out for the best. He knows he's secure from preemptive strikes from Amber, but he can still keep his troops well trained and ready with the occasional harassment across the border into Begma.

Current Objectives.

Dalt's recent experiences with Merlin haven't been enough to mellow him out. He's still keen on "twisting the unicorn's tail," and exacting his revenge on Amber. Still, he's probably had a chance to get a bit more specific with his hatred. Just as Luke seems satisfied with having killed Caine, Dalt may settle for the blood of Bleys.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Amber Rank

STRENGTH = [75 Points]

ENDURANCE = [20 Points]

WARFARE = [50 Points]

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

CREATURES & ARTIFACTS

Dalt's Golden Sword [4 points] - Dalt's sword is, according to Merlin, on the lighter side of the broadsword class.

• Deadly Damage [4 Points]

PERSONAL SHADOWS & WAYS

"Just what," I asked, "is the Eregnor situation?"

"It's their Alsace-Lorraine," he said, "a large, rich area between Kashfa and Begma. It has changed hands back and forth so many times over the centuries that both countries make reasonable-sounding claims to it. Even the inhabitants of the area aren't all that firm on the matter. They have relatives in both directions. I'm not sure they even care which side claims them, so long as their taxes don't go up."

Bill Roth & Merlin,
in Sign of Chaos

Shadow Eregnor [2 points] - Just barely within the Golden Circle of Amber's favored trading partners, Eregnor is a rich area claimed by both Kashfa and Begma. Dalt has sold his mercenary force to the locals, convincing them that he can defend Eregnor from the worst that either Kashfa or Begma have to offer.

• Shadow of the Realm [2 Points]

BAD STUFF

[+1 Points]

DALT—

LOST SON OF CHAOS

(250 POINT VERSION)

"If he is the same man, he's the son of the Desacratrix. You've heard of her?"

"Deela," I said. "Wasn't that her name? Some sort of religious fanatic? Militant?"

Random nodded. "She caused a lot of trouble out around the periphery of the Golden Circle—mostly near Begma. You ever been there?"

"No."

"Well, Begma's the nearest point on the Golden Circle to Kashfa, which is what makes your story particularly interesting. She'd raided a lot in Begma and they couldn't handle her by themselves. They finally reminded us of the protection alliance we have with almost all the Circle kingdoms—and Dad decided to go in personally and teach her a lesson. She'd burned one Unicorn shrine too many. He took a small force, defeated her troops, took her prisoner and hanged a bunch of her men. She escaped, though, and a couple of years later when she was all but forgotten she came back with a fresh force and started the same crap all over. Begma screamed again, but Dad was busy. He sent Bleys in with a larger force. There were several inconclusive engagements—they were raiders, not a regular army—but Bleys finally cornered them and wiped them out. She died that day, leading her troops."

Blood of Amber

Hellmaidens are described (in *The Guns of Avalon*) as "Pale furies out of some hell, lovely and cold. Armed and armored. Long, light hair. Eyes like ice." Mix that with Oberon's genes for red hair and green eyes, and you might very well get Dalt.

If true, it means that Dalt's true heritage is waiting for him out in the Courts of Chaos. Shape shifting, Mastery of the Logrus, a few lessons in magic, and he'll be ready to take over one of the legendary houses. It's just a matter of figuring out which one.

Then, of course, there's the problem of telling Dalt. He likely has no idea of his roots...

As Oberon said, in *The Courts of Chaos*, "I trust the blood of Chaos for strength." If Deela were of Chaos, then Dalt may be no accident, but rather a piece of Oberon's deliberate manipulation. Which leads to the question of exactly what Oberon may have been planning. An irritant to Amber, to keep his successor sharp? A counterpart to

Brand's son Rinaldo? A rescuer for Coral? Or a part of a plan still invisible in Shadow? No way to tell, and it's unlikely that even Dalt knows his part in all this.

Current Objectives.

Dalt may finally find the leisure time to investigate his own mysteries. For example, he may be discovering his own Shape Shifting ability. He's got plenty of reasons not to trust Merlin, but Merlin owes Dalt at least a couple of favors by now, and it might be time to collect.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [10 Points]

STRENGTH = [50 Points]

ENDURANCE = [15 Points]

WARFARE = [25 Points]

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

Shape Shifting [35 Points]

CREATURES & ARTIFACTS

Dalt's Golden Sword [4 Points] - As above.

• Deadly Damage [4 Points]

ADVANCEMENT POINTS

Dalt has 65 points racked up, ready to use. If he doesn't get to the Courts of Chaos pretty soon, where he could pick up Logrus and Sorcery, his Attributes should be raised, especially Warfare.

BAD STUFF

[+4 Points]

DALT—YOUNG BRUISER

(300 POINT VERSION)

The thing that seemed to trouble him the most, actually, was the possibility that the outlaw Dalt was still to be numbered among the living.

"Something about that man..." Random began.

"What?" I'd asked.

"For one thing, I saw Benedict run him through. That generally tends to terminate a person's career."

"Tough son of a bitch," I said. "Or damn lucky. Or both."

*Random & Merlin,
in Blood of Amber*

Dalt, who we could nickname *the man who survived*

Benedict's sword, is turning into a very tough customer. He's got the skill and the drive to defeat most player characters, and the arrogance to take it for granted.

Nowadays it's his mission to get better, a lot better. Having been (literally) kicked around by the mere *ghost* of Amber's King Eric, Dalt sees he has much to learn.

Current Objectives.

So much for destroying Amber, or eliminating elder Amberites. These days Dalt is dedicated to self-improvement. Just as Benedict spent aeons perfecting his Warfare, so Dalt plans on getting faster, tougher and stronger.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Amber

STRENGTH = [75 Points]

ENDURANCE = [75 Points]

WARFARE = [75 Points]

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

Power Words [10 Points] - Magic Negation, Psychic Defense, Neural Disrupt, Pain Attack, Weaken Structure.

CREATURES & ARTIFACTS

Dalt's Golden Sword [4 Points] - A artifact of warning as well as a potent weapon.

- Doubling Damage [2 Point]
- Sensitivity to Danger [2 Points]

Black, Dalt's Horse [7 Points] - Dalt's horse is a powerful, dangerous beast, taking after its master in those respects.

- Engine Speed [4 Points]
- Amber Stamina [2 Points]
- Resistant to Normal Weapons [1 Point]

GOOD STUFF

[4 Points]

GAME MASTER TIPS FOR ROLE-PLAYING DALT

The figure on the dark horse turned and regarded me. I halted a death stroke which ran from reflex to the spikard so fast that it scared me. The air between us was smudged and filled with a screeching note, as of a car grabbing pavement to avert collision...

"...And you remember my military adviser, Dalt," Luke said.

"I remember," I stated.

Dalt stared at the black lines in the air which faded, smoke-like, between us. He actually smiled then, a little.

"Merlin," he said, "son of Amber, Prince of Chaos, the man who dug my grave."

"What's this?" Luke asked.

"A little conversational gambit," I replied. "You've a good memory, Dalt—for faces."

He chuckled.

"Hard to forget something like a grave opening itself," he said. "But I've no quarrel with you, Merlin."

"Nor I you—now," I said.

He grunted then and I grunted back and considered us introduced. I turned back toward Luke.

Prince of Chaos

Grunts.

That pretty much sums it up. Dalt is too pig-headed to back down from any threat, even from Benedict.

Still, actions should speak louder than words. Dalt's actions will show that he can be cooperative, reasonable, and supportive. He seems ready to defend the weak, act honorably, and generally be a responsible citizen. After all, he's Luke's friend, and he was perfectly willing to support Merlin when he had the chance.

DALT AS A PLAYER IN THE GAMES OF THE AMBER COURT

"Dalt, did you hear all that?"

"I did," Dalt replied.

"If you want out, now's your chance."

"And miss an opportunity to twist the Unicorn's tail?" he said. "Keep riding!"

Prince of Chaos

One of the main qualifications for playing the greater game is the inability to trust the other players.

In this, at least, Dalt has a considerable head start. He trusts no one, Amberites least of all. Nor is he handicapped by any maudlin attachment to Amber or to Pattern. He can coldly calculate the advantages of siding with an enemy, or of flipping over the board (destroying Amber), and starting the game anew.

In other words, Dalt is well suited to the game, and it's likely that the elder Amberites will be happy to introduce him to the intrigues.

DARA

She was in her demon form, wearing black trousers and a red shirt with flaring sleeves that came tight at the wrists, my mother. She seemed to see me at about the same time I saw her. For a moment, our gazes locked, then she made the turn onto the stair and began her descent.

As she descended, she shifted smoothly, her appearance changing almost from step to step. As soon as I realized what was occurring I relaxed my own efforts and reversed their small effects. I had commenced changing the moment I had seen her,

and presumably she had done the same on viewing me. I hadn't thought she'd go to that extent to humor me, a second time, here on her own turf.

The shift was completed just as she reached the bottommost stair, and at that moment she looked at me again and smiled, moved toward me, embraced me.

It would have been gauche to say that I'd intended shifting but had forgotten. Or any other remark on the matter.

She pushed me out to arms' distance, lowered her gaze and raised it, shook her head.

"Do you sleep in your clothes before or after violent exercise?" she asked me.

Prince of Chaos

A self-made woman, Dara.

She could have lived on her inheritance. After all, she comes from power, from a convergence of mighty bloodlines. On her father's side, the House of Helgram, and from the martial House of Hendrake on her mother's side. Add to that her marriage to Gramble, Lord of Sawall, and few in the Courts of Chaos could have better credentials. Her lineage in Amber is pretty impressive as well, since she's likely the primary heiress to Benedict's position.

Even so, Dara was willing to stand against the forces of both Amber and Chaos, forging her own coalition, negotiating directly with King Oberon, and working against the Courts of Chaos.

Pretty feisty no matter how you look at it.

Her imperious, totally self-absorbed ways also leak into Dara's role as a mother. Step-mother to Mandor, with whom she forges an important alliance. Mother to Merlin, now destined to be King of the Courts of Chaos. Mother to Despil, about whom we know nothing. And Mother to Jurt, her baby.

And Corwin?

Dara spits fire and rage at the



mention of his name. She throws him into darkness and calls him cold dead. Of course, some would say that such feral hatred must conceal a love gone wrong, and a love that isn't entirely dead. Perhaps the Lady really doth protest too much.

DARA—PATTERN PRINCESS OF CHAOS (300 POINT VERSION)

"Our mother walked the Pattern..."

Merlin, in Prince of Chaos

Dara is a Shape Shifter, and a Sorceress, and a royal Lady of Chaos, with a not-unimportant role in the royal succession.

She even speaks with the Logrus.

Yet Dara was raised to walk the Pattern. She was raised to be Queen in Amber, not in Chaos. Fearing it would bar her from her Amber heritage, bought with the blood of her great-grandmother, Dara was denied the Logrus.

All the planning, all the grooming, all the subterfuge and scheming.

For nothing.

Corwin put away the crown. King Random will never be Dara's cat's paw. And the other elder Amberites have a thousand years of animosity towards the Courts of Chaos. There is no place left for Dara in the politics of Amber.

What choices are left to her? To take a place in Shadow would be to admit utter defeat.

Dara had no choice but to turn back to her homeland, to the Courts of Chaos.

Lacking Logrus, an embarrassing omission unfit for polite discussion, Dara cannot aspire to the throne itself. Yet she can enter the highest ranks. Her family connections allowed her to marry an elder Lord, Gramble of the revered House Sawall. From that position, controlling the House of the Logrus itself, with lines of blood to the Houses of Hendrake and Helgram, with her highly-placed sons as candidates for kingship, there is no limit to her ambitions.

Current Objectives.

All Dara wants is control over the throne of the Courts of Chaos. If Merlin becomes king it would be wise of him to listen to Dara and obey, otherwise she will either compel him, or replace him.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [55 Points]

STRENGTH = [30 Points]

ENDURANCE = [30 Points]

WARFARE = [55 Points]

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

Shape Shift [35 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

Conjuration [20 Points]

High Compelling [5 Points] - Add a fifth ability to normal Conjuration, so the list becomes 1. Basic Conjuration, 2. Conjure Shadow Shape, 3. Empowerment, 4. Complex Conjuration, and 5. High Compelling. Just as qualities and powers can be implanted in creatures, so directives, urges and quests can be inserted, becoming irresistible compulsions.

PERSONAL SHADOWS & WAYS

"He could be at my mother's Fortress Gantu," I mused...

Prince of Chaos

Dara's Shadow Gantu [5 Points] - Within her Fortress, within her personal realm, Dara can manipulate Shadow as befits a mistress of Pattern. Lords of Chaos who are rash enough to enter, or to accept a Trump call from her while she is in residence, will find that the Fortress also doubles as an effective Bastille, a place where Logrus is utterly useless.

- Shadow of the Realm [2 Points]

- Restricted Access [2 Points]

- Control of Contents [1 Point]

DARA—PATTERN PRINCESS OF CHAOS, AND THE LOGRUS

"I recall your plan for the Prince Brand, setting the lady Jasra to snare him. It could not fail, you told me."

"It brought you closer than you ever came, old Serpent, to the power you desire."

"That is true," it acknowledged.

Prince of Chaos

She plays with her liability, with her lack of Logrus, and turns it into an asset.

Those who have assayed the Logrus, even unto mighty Suhuy, must always be pawns to that twisted entity. The Logrus knows their thoughts, controls their movements, and always has the upper hand.

The Logrus addresses her as "Princess Dara." That's because she deals with the Logrus from a position of strength. Her Pattern is a solid wall against the twisty sygil of Chaos. Of all in the Courts of Chaos, Dara is alone in dealing with the Logrus as an equal.

DARA—CRAZY LADY OF THE COURTS

(400 POINT VERSION)

"...Logrus. It's a kind of chaotic maze. Keeps shifting about. Very dangerous. Unbalances you mentally, too, for a time. No fun."

*Merlin, in *Trumps of Doom**

Merlin claims that he was the first to bear the dual images of Pattern and Logrus. In fact, after he had assayed the Logrus, before he walked the Pattern, Suhuy argued that he would likely die in the attempt.

When Dara discovered that Merlin had succeeded, had gained both the Logrus and the Pattern, she resolved to be next.

As it turned out, taking the Logrus *after* being an initiate of the Pattern was exactly the wrong thing to do. Where Merlin's Logrus-insanity was largely dispelled by his Pattern Walk, the stress of the Logrus curling around the Pattern in her mind drove Dara to madness.

Now only a few (Suhuy? Gramble? Mandor?) know just how unbalanced Dara has become. Even they would be shocked at the depths of her derangement.

Paranoia, delusions, megalomania and worse all roar through Dara's brain. She is unpredictable, dangerous, and a threat to everyone.

Worse, she seems rational. In speech, in manner, even in the description of her plans, she looks normal. After all, compared to the quirky bunch of omnipotent immortals who populate Amber *and* the Courts of Chaos, she seems downright predictable.

Current Objectives.

Objectives? Dara's objectives aren't really the issue here. She'll strike at whoever offends her (though with enough canny subtlety that her victims may never suspect the source of their trouble).

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [100 Points]

STRENGTH = [35 Points]

ENDURANCE = [35 Points]

WARFARE = [35 Points]

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points] - Although Dara has walked the Pattern, and was once a full practitioner in its power, the Logrus has walled off that portion of her mind. That part of Dara, her more-or-less sane self, is oriented toward the Pattern and occasionally twists her footsteps so that she'll find herself shifting Shadow back to Amber.

Uncontrollable Logrus Affliction [55 Points] - The Logrus, in attempting to weave its way around her Pattern-activated blood, has created two beings within Dara. And the Logrus-self, twisted and insane, is completely in control.

Now Dara is given to completely losing it, summoning the Logrus unintentionally, or lashing out at whoever she thinks is bugging her. It may even be that Logrus Tendrils will sever themselves and go forth to do her bidding without her conscious control.

Advanced Shape Shift [65 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

Demonic Conjunction [25 Points] - Dara can summon demons and other creatures of the Pit as she wishes. Once they are in her presence she can bend their wills and their minds, imposing compelling and delusions.

PERSONAL SHADOWS & WAYS

"...I go a bit reclusive every now and then, when the weight of society becomes troublesome..."

*Dara, in *Prince of Chaos**

Daraways [5 Points] - In this near-Chaos realm is Fortress Gantu, Dara's own private madhouse. Here she retreats when she exceeds the limits of her sanity, to rave and scream and throw herself down its dark corridors.

• **Shadow of the Realm [2 Points]**

• **Restricted Access [2 Points]**

• **Control of Contents [1 Point]** - Keyed to respond to Dara's delusions, the Shadow instantly brings her phantom enemies to Shadowy flesh, and makes her dreamscapes real. A very scary place to visit.

BAD STUFF

[+20 Points] - Dara's Bad Stuff manifests itself in her twisted brain and lack of control.

DARA—CRAZY LADY OF THE COURTS, AND THE LOGRUS

"I'd thought—we might—deal with—you—ourselves," she said, as the air began to shimmer before her. "I was—wrong."

The Sign of the Logrus took form before her. Immediately, her features grew more animated.

Then I felt its terrible regard. When it addressed me, that pastiche-voice tore at my nervous system:

"I have been summoned," it said, "to deal with your recalcitrance, oh man who would be king."

*Dara & the Logrus,
in Prince of Chaos*

Dara is in the grip of two powerful elements of the Logrus. First, the dominant part of herself, the Logrus-mind. Second, the Logrus itself, which manipulates her, but which also distrusts her.

When Dara is in danger, or simply starts to lose her self-control, the Logrus itself will appear, as it did when Merlin's Spikard defeated her in magical combat.



On the “Laws” of Royal Succession

Kings are chosen by what may seem to be simple rules. However, think about who writes the rules, and the law, and who interprets them.

First, they're written by sitting rulers as they assign their estates.

Second, they're written by those who seize power. Usually, in this case, they want to justify their reign. If tradition calls for the line to pass through only male heirs, but a powerful usurper can only claim a female connection, then, by golly, some lawyer is going to very well unearth a learned argument “proving” the equal validity of female succession.

For example, in the rule of primogeniture, it's stated that a King's eldest surviving son, or the survivors among that son's offspring, will be next in line for the throne.

If Swayvill had died with living sons, then the eldest of these living sons would be the heir. It is also true, however, that the children of the eldest son take precedence over the younger sons.

Assuming, of course, that the Courts of Chaos operate under primogeniture—there are plenty of other arcane systems, each with their own set of nit-picky rules. In fact, primogeniture wasn't “traditional” even among European monarchies. Primogeniture was a Catholic idea, promoted by a variety of popes for their own reasons. Traditions varied, but usually estates were to be divided up equally among all the surviving heirs (which could include siblings, parents, cousins, etc.), or just among the progeny. Even where inheritance passed only to the children there were still questions about how much went to legitimate or illegitimate offspring, and whether single daughters, married daughters, or both, would be included.

The problem, in any system, gets even more complicated when a line dies out, when a ruler dies without leaving any direct offspring.

Then it becomes a matter of weaving back up and down the family tree, looking for who has the strongest claim to the throne.

Back one or two generations, and things are pretty simple.

Go back more than three generations, and things can get horribly complex.

Again, let's try to sort through an example. Assume that you have a grandmother who would, if she were living, be next in line for the throne of, say, Outer Moravia. Then you find out that you've got a cousin (a rather distant cousin), whose grandfather is your grandmother's elder brother. That means your cousin has a greater claim than you.

If you want to keep the crown of Outer Moravia on your side of the family, what can you do? Aside from arranging for an “accident” for your cousin, you could marry someone to strengthen your claim.

Y'see, at this point both you and your cousin are each just one-fourth royalty. If you both marry non-Moravians, your kids will be just one-eighth royalty, and your kids will always lose the throne to your cousin's kids.

However, if you can find the right marriage partner, someone who also has a claim on the throne of Outer Moravia, then your kids might take precedence over your cousin's kids. For example, what if you marry someone who has a great-grandparent who was in line for the throne? Your new spouse is just one-eighth royalty, but your kids will be three-sixteenths royalty and could claim to have descended from two different royal lines.

Remember, that's a simple example! Skip back a couple more generations, add in a couple of dozen royal Houses, and you'll quickly feel the urge to computerize the whole process of evaluating potential heirs.

DARA— MISTRESS OF LOGRUS (500 POINT VERSION)

"You should have told me."

"Why?"

"For counsel. Possibly for assistance."

"Against the Powers of the universe? How well-connected are you, mother?"

She smiled.

"It is possible that one such as myself may possess special knowledge of their workings."

"One such as yourself...?"

"A sorceress of my skills."

"Just how good are you, mother?"

"I don't think they come much better, Merlin."

Prince of Chaos

Dara seems to serve the Logrus. She seems to be its most important pawn.

It's all a sham, part of her grand deception.

Everything that Merlin encounters, if you trace it back to its origins, leads to a single source—Dara. Julia and Victor Melman were trained by Jasra, but Jasra was herself trained by Dara. Luke is the son of Jasra, but Dara was responsible for bringing together Brand and Jasra.

It's ridiculous to think that one of Dara's agents, the demon *ty'iga*, would be so incompetent as to not be able to tell the difference between Merlin and Luke. No, the *ty'iga*, in the form of Luke's girlfriend Gail, was likewise manipulating events, as dictated by Mistress Dara.

Even the actions of the Logrus seem premeditated, and even the Logrus acknowledges that Dara is the one behind its plans.

Current Objectives.

As its controller, Dara's objectives and that of the Logrus are one and the same. Both seek to expand the dominion of Chaos, to diminish the influence of Pattern.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [100 Points]

STRENGTH = [20 Points]

ENDURANCE = [40 Points]

WARFARE = [40 Points]

POWERS

Exalted Logrus Mastery [140 Points] - Dara is capable of carrying the Logrus around like a pet dog, of

summoning it to her, or of commanding it to produce Logrus-Ghosts to order. Once Dara brings the Logrus to mind, she can see through the eyes of anyone else using the Logrus, either peering into their minds, or manipulating the Logrus tendrils at their location.

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

Advanced Shape Shift [65 Points]

Power Words [10 Points] - Pattern Negation, Psychic Disrupt, Weaken Structure, and two different versions of Chaos Negation. Her first Power Word of Chaos Negation works the conventional way, while the second resonates through Dara, disrupting her connection with the Logrus itself, and causing the Logrus a moment of pain and confusion.

Sorcery [15 Points]

Conjuration [20 Points]

DARA—MISTRESS OF LOGRUS, AND THE LOGRUS

The brightness of the Sign increased.

At this, Dara was on her feet, moving to interpose herself between it and myself.

"Stay," she said. "We've more important matters to deal with than vengeance upon a toy. I have dispatched my cousins Hendrake for the bride of Chaos. If you wish this plan to succeed, I suggest you assist them."

Prince of Chaos

Dara has shackled the Logrus, and bound it to her will.

The great danger in this is that she has ultimately weakened the foundation of the Courts of Chaos. Where the Logrus was once a neutral power, used equally by all of its initiates, it is now secretly warped to Dara's aims.

For example, all those claimants to the throne, the hundred or more who stood between Swayvill and Merlin, each trusted their own power in the Logrus. Each of them died, betrayed by the Logrus itself.

The situation may not last much longer. The public deaths of Princes Tmer and Tubble, witnessed by thousands during the last rites of King Swayvill, might finally have alerted others to the treachery of the Logrus. Dara's secret reign of power may soon come to an end...

GAME MASTER TIPS FOR ROLE- PLAYING DARA

"It may not be able to send you all the way to the Courts," Corwin said. "That's getting awfully near the Logrus. But you'll work something out with it, or vice-versa. How is Dara?"

"It's been a long time since I've seen her for

more than a few moments," I answered. "She is still peremptory, arrogant, and over-solicitous when it comes to me. I get the impression, too, that she may be involved in local political scheming as well as aspects of the larger relationship between the Courts and Amber."

Prince of Chaos

There's a tendency to assume that Dara has overreacted against Corwin, imprisoning him for the relatively minor offense of cheating in a duel. After all, Corwin killed Lord Borel out of necessity.

But look at things from Dara's point of view.

She had, at great personal risk, joined with Oberon against both the forces of Amber and the Courts of Chaos. In return for her service she expected many things.

Think of what she was promised. A royal marriage to Corwin, Oberon's chosen successor, a match that would make her Queen of Amber, and put her son Merlin in as heir to the throne of Amber. Even more, given their joint power, and the purity of her lineage, she might even hope that Merlin would be the first ruler of a unified kingdom, joining Amber and Chaos.

In promise of all these things, Oberon gave Dara the imperial signet, the king's seal. It is Oberon's promise, his payment for her loyalty and service.

Everything was headed her way.

Then Oberon's face appeared in the sky over the final battlefield. "The problem of the succession will be upon you," said Oberon. "I had wishes in this regard, but I see now that these were futile."

Picture Dara at that moment, perhaps holding the dying Borel in her arms, realizing that she has been betrayed. Not by Oberon, but by Corwin.

When she finally came upon Corwin, as he lay exhausted, she thought that the Jewel of Judgement was lost, that Amber would be destroyed. Everything lost because of Corwin.

If there is one thing we Game Masters must learn from Zelazny it is how to always act from within our characters. That means, for example, when role-playing Dara, it's important to see through her eyes, understand her hurts, and make sense of what may seem mean or cruel to others.

Remember that Dara has her reasons.

DARA AS A PLAYER IN THE GAMES OF THE COURTS OF CHAOS

"...I don't know Dara's status right now in her father's House—Helgram—or her mother's—Hendrake. But it might be worth a power struggle within Sawall if that's where the next king is coming from..."

Prince of Chaos

A fusion of Houses Hendrake and Helgram, descendent of Benedict, mother of Corwin's son, already strong in the blood of the royal family, you'd think that would be a solid enough foundation for anyone in the Courts of Chaos.

It was not enough for Dara.

She sought out Gramble, the aged Lord of Sawall, for her husband, and bore him two sons. Gradually, relentlessly, she sought to rule the most powerful House in all the Courts of Chaos: The House of Suhuy, Keeper of the Logrus. The Ways of Sawall contain the very cavern housing the Logrus itself.

It's also noteworthy that her children, having a combination of her lineage and that of Lord Gramble, actually preceded her in the succession for Swayvill's throne.

In fact, if Lord Gramble hadn't officially adopted Merlin, then Despil, Jurt and Dara, could have come before Merlin in the line of succession.

Likewise, it's interesting to note that Lord Gramble, who is reported as sick, but not dead, might very possibly come behind his wife, or any of his own children, in the succession.

DARA AS MOTHER

"My dear Merlin," she said, taking my head between her hands and kissing me upon the lips. "I am pleased to see you looking so well. It has been quite a while since last you visited."

"I've had a very active existence of late."

"To be sure," she said. "I've heard some report of your various misadventures."

"I'd imagine you would have. It's not everyone has a ty'iga following him about, periodically seducing him in various forms, and making life, in general, very complicated with unwanted efforts at protection."

"It shows that I care, dear."

"It also shows that you have no respect for my privacy nor trust in my judgment."

Prince of Chaos

Oh, come on! Merlin is being completely unrealistic. Why does he expect parents to trust the judgement of their kids? Merlin is what, twenty-five? Thirty at the outside. A pup by the standards of the Courts of Chaos, a babe in Amber. It's not in Dara's job description to trust her son's judgement. The Mother Guild prohibits it.

Dara, as a mother, is no better or worse than any other. Give her an opportunity, and sufficient suspicion, and she'll check out that "private" drawer, look under the mattress, or take a peek in her youngster's diary.

As a mother, Dara is a perfectionist, looking for ways to suggest improvement, large or small, in her offspring. She constantly pushes each to excel, each to achieve more.

After all, why do you think Merlin ended up as a Shape Shifter, a Trump Artist, a Sorcerer, and a Logrus Master? Still, she's not satisfied, and she'll still take the time to comment on his lack of devotion, or shortcomings in his personal appearance.

And, since she seems less than satisfied with her current brood, it's entirely possible that Dara might produce another batch of children. Making Dara yet another possibility for the parent of player characters.

DARA'S SHAPE SHIFT FORMS

The rock phased again as I nodded, and a lithe demonic figure entered, shimmering bluey. I was on my feet in an instant, then bowing to kiss the hand she extended.

"Mother," I said. "I hadn't anticipated the pleasure—this soon."

She smiled, and then it went away in a swirl. The scales faded, the contours of her face and form flowed. The blue went away into a normal though pale flesh-color. Her hips and shoulders widened as she lost something of height, though still remained tall. Her brown eyes grew more attractive as the heavy brow ridges receded. A few freckles became visible across her now-human, slightly upturned nose. Her brown hair was longer than when last I had seen her in this form. And she was still smiling. Her red tunic became her, simply belted; a rapier hung at her left hip.

Prince of Chaos

Suddenly, Dara stood within the frame I had created—tall, coal-black, eyes of green flame.

Prince of Chaos

"I can't believe this," she said, becoming a flower-faced cat and then a tree of green flame.

"Believe as you would," Mandor told her. "He's won."

The tree flared through its autumn and was gone.

Prince of Chaos

Forget the Shape Shifting as utility, Dara uses hers for beauty, style and elegance. She changes color, texture and configuration constantly, tailoring herself to match her mood.

Dara seems to have a large selection of shapes to go along with a wide clothing wardrobe (for all we know, there are couturiers in the Courts of Chaos who "design" chic forms and vogue shades). She could change her body to match her shoes, or vice-versa.

And, given that Shadow is so easily malleable in and near the Courts of Chaos, she can summon all the appropriate garments, and accessories, to complement whatever form she chooses.

In other words, Dara doesn't merely shape, she *creates*.

Constant Allies & Enemies:

Dara seems capable of assembling an astonishing variety of allies. They may not be friends, or even trusted, but they seem to obey her will. Just how far she can depend on her sons remains to be seen. Mandor (with whom she seems to contest for control of House Sawall) is more than a casual partner. One particular interesting possibility is that Jasra continues to be Dara's tool, which in turn may imply that Dalt, Luke, Julia and/or Jurt are actually carrying out Dara's commands.



DARA'S BOOK OF SPELLS

by Cathy Klessig & Erick Wujcik

Dara turned into a liquid flame, coiling, waving, flowing through circles and figure-eights, as she advanced and retreated, tossing bubbles of euphoria and pain to orbit me. I tried to blow them away, hurricane-wise...

Prince of Chaos

Bubbles of Feeling

Bubbles stream from the caster's hands, and swirl around the target. Each bubble contains a concentration of feelings, captured from some place in Shadow where psyche is broadcast, so that a strong emotion is emitted when a bubble bursts. The closer the burst, the more likely the victim will be affected. One by one, the bubbles will swoop in, strike the target, and burst. The target will then feel whatever emotions he or she would feel, if that event had just happened to him or her. Basically, this is a distraction spell, keeping the victim from concentrating properly on fighting, spell-casting, power-summoning, or quick movement.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Casting Time: One Hour, plus an additional Fifteen Minutes for each additional emotion beyond the first.

Lynchpins: Additional fifteen minutes casting time each. Magic of Shadow, Hand Motions (Optional), Name of Target (Optional), Type of Emotion (Optional, but one Lynchpin per emotion specified), Trigger (Optional), Dispel Word (Optional), and Quantity of Bubbles (Optional).

A wave of heat swept over me. I shifted my attention at once, attempting to raise a barrier. It was not an attack against my person. It was something soothing, coercive. I bared my teeth as I fought to hold it off.

"Mother—" I growled.

Prince of Chaos

Coercion

Why break into somebody's mind with a battering ram or a pickaxe, if you can coax them into handing you the keys? Under the influence of a "Warm Fuzzy" spell, the target will feel safe, willing to trust the caster. If successful, the victim will be easy meat for Imperatives, or any other invasive spell. As with other invasive spells, the victim's Psyche must be overcome. Also, unless the victim has a relatively inferior Psyche, there must be at least some positive feelings for the caster. It might also be called a Judas spell; it only works if cast by those you like or trust.

Spell Type: Invasive.

Casting Time: One Hour.

Lynchpins: Additional five minutes casting time each. Name/Description of Subject, Name of Caster's Current Shadow location, Name of Subject's location in Shadow, Duration (Optional), Dispel Word (Optional).

I raised an umbrella against the Confusion Storm...

Prince of Chaos

Confusion Storm

Find a race of strongly Psychic creatures out in Shadow, of the type that broadcast their emotions. Then record their confusion as they are subjected to a number of stresses. Finally, put the resulting recording through a mantic blender, sight first, then hearing, then taste, smell, etc., till the pieces are no more than half a second long. Release, so the target is subjected to a barrage of emotions. If successful, the victim will be literally unable to form a whole word, let alone a thought.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Casting Time: Two Hours.

Lynchpins: Additional five minutes casting time each. Magic of Shadow, Name of Target (Optional), Duration (Optional), Dispel Word (Optional).

Dara was harder to nail, but when I blasted her with all of the channels she hit me with a Dazzlement spell she'd been holding in reserve, the only thing that saved her from turning into a statue as I'd intended. Instead, it left her in mortal form and restricted to slow-motion.

Prince of Chaos

Dazzlement

A cone of brilliant, multicolored light springs from the caster's hand, usually aimed right into someone's face. For several seconds afterward, the target will see nothing but bright, multicolored spots before his or her eyes. But the spell is designed for minimum leakage beyond the cone, so as not to blind the caster. It's like a flashlight: it only blinds you if it shines right into your eyes.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Casting Time: Thirty Minutes.

Lynchpins: Additional ten minutes casting time each. Hand Gesture, Intensity (Optional), Magic of Shadow.

A flame appeared near her left foot and began orbiting her body in a counterclockwise direction, spiraling upward, leaving a line of fire to blaze redly behind it. By the time it reached the crown of her head she was entirely concealed. It went out with a faint whooshing sound then, taking her along with it.

I moved forward and knelt, feeling the area on which she'd stood. It was a little warm, that's all. Nice spell. Nobody'd ever taught me that one. Thinking back on it then, I realized that Mom had always had a flair when it came to entrances and exits.

*Merlin, describing Dara,
in Prince of Chaos*

Special Effects Teleport

Her arrivals and departures are always exceptional, because Dara attempts to never appear or leave the same way twice. She generally has at least a couple of these spells racked and ready to go at all times, with the special effects already defined, and with only the basic two location lynchpins required.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Casting Time: One Hour.

Lynchpins: Additional ten minutes casting time each. Magic of Shadow, Name of Destination, Type of Special Effect (Color, flame, Light, Mist, Cloud, Swirl, etc.), Transition Style (fade up, fade down, fade clockwise, dissipate, fold up, diminish, "pop" out, etc.), Sound Effect (Optional-boom, roar, whistle, whoosh, etc.), and After-Effect (Optional-scent, temperature, electrical affect, or a physical token like leaves, confetti, etc.). She can also

construct the spell so that the effects of departure and arrival are different, doubling the number of effects lynchpins.

...held myself together through mom's Spirit Split...

Prince of Chaos

Spirit Split

When you get right down to it, people are walking bundles of conflicting impulses anyway. Fight, or run away? Fall in love, or go take a cold shower? Everyone lives in an ongoing tension, caught between courage and cowardice, generosity and greed, affection and anger, etc. Spirit Split divides the conflicting impulses into two separate personalities, while still forcing them to inhabit the same body. The target flickers back and forth between (for instance) his combative and his cowardly self on a second-by-second basis, and the result usually is that he can't complete any action.

For example, the combative half takes over, and draws his sword; the cowardly half takes over, drops the sword, and turns to run; the combative half takes over, whirls and dives to grab the weapon again; the cowardly half takes over, screams, and crawls full-speed under a nearby table.

Spell Type: Invasive.

Casting Time: One Hour.

Lynchpins: Additional ten minutes casting time each. Name/Description of Subject, Name of Caster's Current Shadow location, Name of Subject's location in Shadow, Duration (Optional), Dispel Word (Optional).

Unweaving

Most effective against Shape Shifters, the spell forcibly shoves the victim into component parts. It causes the body to fall apart into a number of simple organisms, each representing one of the Shape Shifter's usual forms. Each of these sub-creatures is about a foot tall, and quite harmless. In fact, since none of them is much more intelligent than a rabbit, they aren't likely to harm anybody. The more talented the affected Shape Shifter, the quicker they can grow back together; but more talented Shape Shifters will tend to have a lot more component creatures to reabsorb. Non-Shape Shifters will only feel confusion at the impulse to sub-divide.

Spell Type: Invasive.

Casting Time: One Hour.

Lynchpins: Additional fifteen minutes casting time each. Name/Description of Subject, Magic of Shadow, Reassembly Command (Optional).

DELWIN

"Son of Amber. Wearer of the spikard"—this from within a shadowy niche to my left.

I halted and stared. The frame was white, the glass was gray. Within was a man I had never met. His shirt was black and opened at the neck. He wore a brown leather vest, his hair dark blond, eyes perhaps green.

Prince of Chaos

Not a trusting man, Prince Delwin.

The closest Merlin comes to an encounter is seeing Delwin in a mirror while dreaming of visiting Castle Amber's fantastic Hall of Mirrors. In other words, Delwin's appearance is nothing but an image, inside a vision, during a illusion.

Extreme caution, even by the standards of his Amber brethren.

DELWIN— PRISONER PRINCE (200 POINT VERSION)

"My name is Delwin, and we may never actually meet—unless certain ancient powers come loose."

He raised his hand, and I saw that he, too, wore a spikard. He moved it toward me.

"Touch your ring to mine," he commanded. "Then it can be ordered to bring you to me."

I raised mine and moved it toward the glass. At the moment they seemed to touch, there was a flash of light and Delwin was gone.

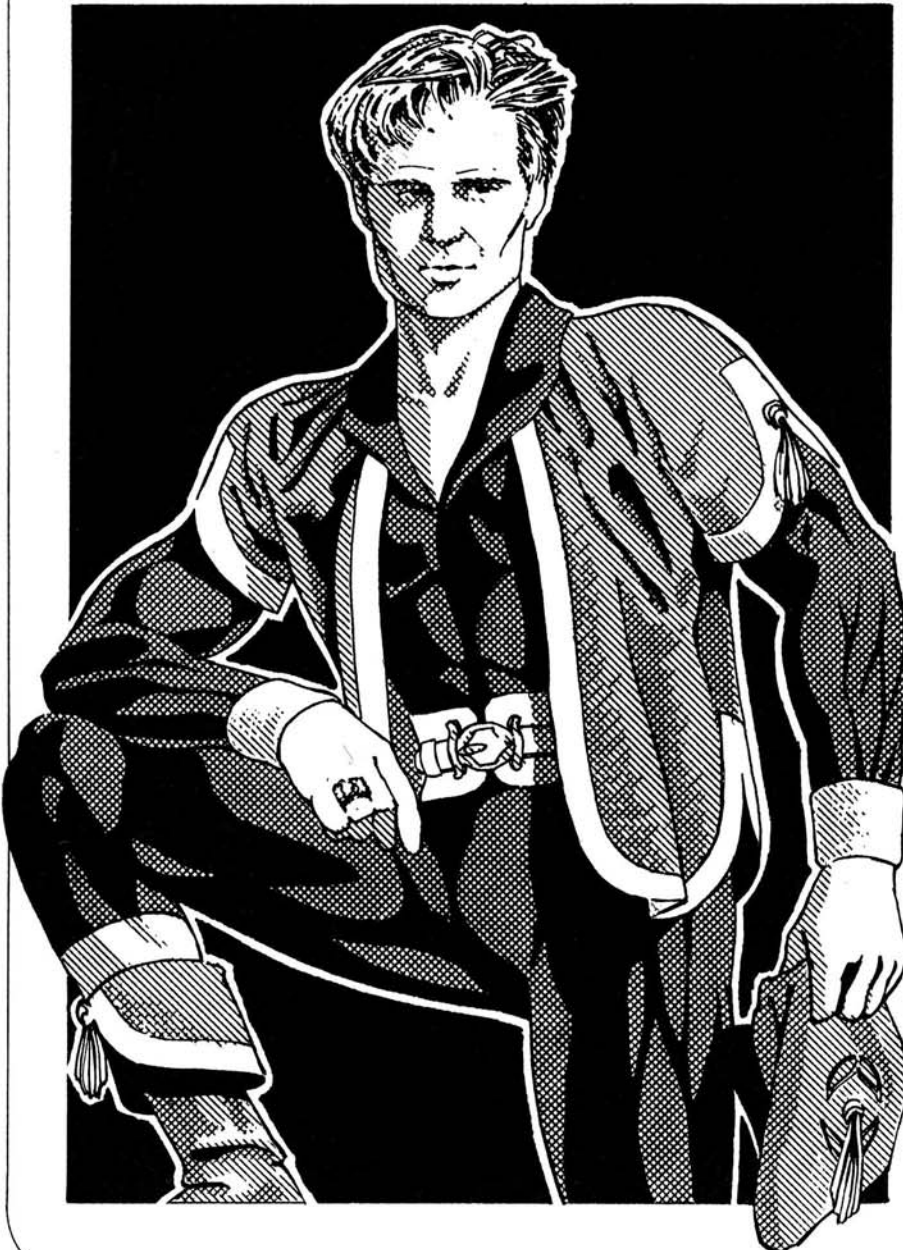
Prince of Chaos

What if the powers Delwin describes are the same powers that imprison him? Put in place by Oberon, one (or more) of his back-stabbing siblings, or someone from the Courts? Or...?

Trapped, Delwin seems to be using his time effectively. Not only fighting his way out of his prison, but also planning for his eventual escape.

Knowing that his prison was designed to block Trump contact, coming or going, Delwin has taught himself that art. Now he can take Trump calls, and sometimes send his image outward, even though he still can't physically breach the walls.

Note that, immediately after telling Merlin that they'd not be meeting, Delwin had Merlin "Touch your ring to mine," so that "...it can be ordered to bring you to me." It could well be that Merlin figures heavily into Delwin's plans for escape.



Current Objectives.

Delwin wants out. Further, as he learns more and more about the mechanism of his prison, he also plots how he will use that knowledge, and how he will wield the powers, once he has seized control.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [25 Points]

STRENGTH = Amber Rank

ENDURANCE = [25 Points]

WARFARE = [45 Points]

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

Trump Artistry [40 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

DELWIN—**ABSENTEE AMBERITE****(250 POINT VERSION)**

When Oberon's wife Rilga had shown less hardihood than many by aging rapidly and retiring to a reclusive country shrine, he had gone off and remarried, somewhat to the chagrin of their children—Caine, Julian and Gérard. But to confuse genealogists and sticklers for family legality, he had done it in a place where time flowed far more rapidly than in Amber. Interesting arguments both for and against the bigamous nature of his marriage to Harla may be made. I'm in no position to judge. I had the story from Flora years ago, and in that she'd never gotten along too well with Delwin and Sand, the offspring of that union, she was inclined to the pro-bigamy interpretation. I'd never seen pictures of Delwin or Sand until now. There weren't any hanging around the palace, and they were seldom mentioned. But they had lived in Amber for the relatively short time Harla was queen there. Following her death, they grew unhappy with Oberon's policies toward her homeland—which they visited often—and after a time they departed, vowing not to have anything to do with Amber again. At least that's the way I'd heard it. There could easily have been all sorts of sibling politicking involved too. I don't know.

But here were two missing members of the royal family, and obviously Luke had learned of them and approached them, hoping to revive old

resentments and gain allies. He admitted that it hadn't worked. Two centuries is a long time to hold a grudge at high pitch. That's about how long it had been since their departure, as I understood it. I wondered fleetingly whether I should get in touch with them, just to say hello. If they weren't interested in helping Luke I didn't suppose they'd be interested in helping the other side either, now they were aware there was another side. It did seem proper that I should introduce myself and pay my respects, as a family member they'd never met. I decided that I would do it sometime, though the present moment was hardly appropriate. I added their Trumps to my own collection, along with good intentions.

Blood of Amber

Whether he is really so offended by the politics of Amber, or whether that is merely a mask for his real attitude, Delwin has managed to keep his activities out of public view for centuries.

His current scheme is to subvert the Spikards, those ancient powers that include Corwin's sword Grayswandir and Brand's sword Werewindle. He has done this by combining two powers in a novel way.

First, he has learned to use a modified form of Conjunction that can subtly manipulate the aspects of the Spikards.

Then, Delwin has learned to Shape Shift himself, as if he were a creature of his own blood, and insert his presence into the Spikards themselves.

When his plans are complete, Delwin will become the living "soul" of the Spikards.

Current Objectives.

Complete and total mastery of the Spikards and the powers that generate them. By supplying Merlin, the man who might be king in the Courts of Chaos, with two of the Spikard rings, he hopes to master all the forces of the Logrus.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [50 Points]

STRENGTH = Amber Rank

ENDURANCE = [40 Points]

WARFARE = [15 Points]

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

Advanced Shape Shifting [65 Points]

Simple Construct Conjunction [30 Points] - In addition to all the usual aspects of Conjunction, this allows Delwin to manipulate existing Constructs using Empowerment. Not only can Delwin add Qualities and

Powers to Constructs, he can also remove them (although temporarily, in both cases).

DELWIN—CUSTODIAN OF THE POWERS

(300 POINT VERSION)

"There is a custodian—possibly two," she replied. "A self-exiled Prince of Amber and his sister have guarded a portion of this power for a long while. It would seem in order to see that they still live, still discharge the duty."

"Self-exiled? Why?"

"Personal reasons, involving the late King."

"Where are they?"

"I do not know."

"Then how could we find them?"

"There is a Trump."

She rose and moved to a small chest of drawers. Opening one, she withdrew a boxed set of cards. Slowly, she counted down from the top of the deck and removed one.

When she returned she presented me with the card, portrait of a slim man with hair the color of rust. "His name is Delwin," she said.

Luke & Vialle, in "The Salesman's Tale"

Custodian is an interesting word, an interesting description.

It could mean that Delwin is holding the power of the Spikards in check, simply preventing them from being released and doing damage to the universe at large.

On the other hand, the Spikards might be a loose power, one that Oberon had been keeping to himself. In which case, it would be a good idea for Delwin to keep his Amber siblings, or his Chaos cousins, from meddling.

Or, things being the way they usually are in Amber, Delwin has to watch for all of these eventualities, with a few more thrown in for good measure.

Regardless, Delwin is the man with the keys to the power of the Spikard. Ultimately, he can control any or all of them, and his power is enormous.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [100 Points]

STRENGTH = [10 Points]

ENDURANCE = [25 Points]

WARFARE = [25 Points]

POWERS

Advanced Pattern Imprint [75 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

Complex Construct Conjunction [50 Points] - Delwin can order and reshape Constructs, providing that he can gain access to their source Shadow. In the case of the Spikards, Delwin has the ability to manipulate their shapes (so that, for example, he was able to turn one Spikard into a duplicate of the one worn by King Swayvill), and he can lay very complex spells upon them.

GAME MASTER TIPS FOR ROLE-PLAYING DELWIN

"...Then this must be Delwin," I said.

"Right."

"You didn't do these two cards. They're not your style, and you probably wouldn't have known what they looked like to begin with."

"Perceptive. My father drew them, back in the time of the troubles—for all the good it did him. They wouldn't help him either."

"Either?"

"They weren't interested in helping me, despite their disaffection with this place. Count them as out of the game."

Blood of Amber

Well, maybe not.

Just because an Amberite doesn't frequent the halls of Amber, that doesn't mean they aren't dabbling in the family's favorite game. Delwin should seem to be aloof and uninterested, but he's likely as keen for gossip, and as involved in plots, as whoever sits next to the King of Amber.

DELWIN AS FATHER

A good, ambivalent choice for the father of a player character. Since Delwin is such a mystery, and since he's been away from Amber for centuries, there's a wide range of possible relationships.

Constant Allies & Enemies:

It seems likely that Delwin has very few allies. His sister, Sand, unless they've had a falling out since leaving Amber. Probably Bleys, because they seem to be working together to benefit Merlin. On the enemies column, Delwin left Amber because of a rivalry with brothers Caine, Julian and Gérard, and the hatred may live. It's also interesting that Delwin immediately shut off Luke once Jasra's name was mentioned, yet he had no such strong reaction to Luke's dad, Brand (in "The Salesman's Tale").

DESPIL

I had always gotten along reasonably well with Despil, though he tended to take Jurt's side more often than my own. But that was understandable. They were full brothers, and Jurt was the baby.

Blood of Amber

A cipher.

Despil is the first son of the union between Dara and Lord Sawall. In the bickering between his elder Merlin and his baby brother Jurt, Despil sort of gets lost in the shuffle.



The big question is, does Despil enjoy being invisible? Perhaps Despil is just a genuinely nice guy. One of those children more interested in helping than hindering his parents. Maybe Despil just isn't interested in the kingship, or all the family squabbles. After all, it's possible that someone as highborn as Despil might be bored with the whole "royal" thing.

On the other hand, perhaps he's been harboring a mass of frustration and anger. Maybe, as the middle child, he looks forward to the day when he can have his vengeance on all those who ignored him. How perfect it would be if Despil deliberately pitted his brothers against each other.

Not that it matters much. Regardless of Despil's true intentions, he may remain hidden for a long time to come.

DESPIL—SAWALL'S

RECLUSE

(150 POINT VERSION)

"Say that Dara or Mandor removed Tmer and Tubble. You knew you'd have to take care of me yourself, but what about Despil?"

"He'd step aside for me."

"You asked him?"

"No. But I'm sure."

*Merlin & Jurt,
in Prince of Chaos*

By pulling out of the running for the top spot in the Courts of Chaos, Despil may be setting himself up to seize a much more desirable position. Instead of the man who would be king, he becomes the man who would be Lord Sawall.

In which case, Despil may be responsible for pitting Merlin and Jurt against each other, and letting them work toward the throne. Given the amount of time and energy that Mandor and Dara have spent trying to manipulate Merlin onto the throne, Despil might have been encouraging there as well ("no, no, don't worry about me, I'll protect Sawall for you, you just go ahead and deal with that pesky Merlin...").

All Despil has to do is keep Dara, Mandor, Merlin, and Jurt occupied, and he might be able to pull off a neat, uncontested, takeover of Sawall. Which would, in turn, give Despil control of the Cave of the Logrus, and possibly

even a handle on Uncle Suhuy.

Provided, of course, that father Gramble, Lord of Sawall, dies at the appropriate time...

Current Objectives.

He wants to be head of the House Sawall, but without making too many enemies. He'll also be trying to find a way to make Suhuy one of his supporters. Otherwise, Despil will do what he can to keep the rest of the House as busy as possible.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [15 Points]

STRENGTH = Chaos [+10 Points]

ENDURANCE = Amber

WARFARE = Amber

POWERS

Advanced Logrus Mastery [70 Points]

Shape Shifting [35 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

Conjuration [20 Points]

GOOD STUFF

[5 Points]

DESPIL—HEIR TO THE THRONE OF CHAOS (200 POINT VERSION)

"I take it you're next in line, and then Jurt?"

"Actually, our brother Despil is next after me. Jurt once said that Despil would probably step aside for him, but I think that was wishful thinking. I'm not at all sure he would..."

Luke & Merlin, in Prince of Chaos

Merlin accuses Jurt of a bit of wistful thinking. It may be that Merlin, now headed for his coronation in the Courts of Chaos, may find he's been a little wistful himself.

Despil may be waiting for him. Already crowned, already on the throne.

After all, kingship is fundamentally political. By staying behind in the Courts, while his brothers were gallivanting off in Shadow, Despil had the opportunity to shake the right hands, and whisper in the right ears. Heck, he's probably had time to pick out a new chair and change the drapes.

By the time Merlin returns, Despil may have already gathered all the support he needs. All the powerful houses, each suspicious of any "Amberite" like Merlin (the

son of Corwin, no less!) gaining the throne, might already have Despil's coronation lined up.

Not that Despil will be belligerent or rude about it. No, when Merlin shows up, he'll simply explain that the important thing is that the throne is held by someone of House Sawall. Despil will say, quite reasonably, that he has simply reduced the friction and stabilized the Courts of Chaos, something that everyone should want.

In fact, if Despil plays his cards right, Merlin could be his biggest supporter.

Current Objectives.

Capture the throne of the Courts of Chaos. Once secure in his seat, Despil will seek to put things back in order. If he can find a way to keep his brothers, Mandor, Merlin and Jurt, simultaneously busy and of service to the crown, so much the better.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Amber

STRENGTH = Amber

ENDURANCE = Amber

WARFARE = [50 Points]

POWERS

Logrus Mastery [45 Points]

Trump Artistry [40 Points]

Shape Shifting [35 Points]

Power Words [10 Points] - Burst of Magic, Pattern Negation, Psychic Defense, Trump Disrupt, and Weaken Structure.

Sorcery [15 Points]

GOOD STUFF

[5 Points]

DESPIL—SHADOW STORM TIGHTROPE WALKER (250 POINT VERSION)

I came up beside her and followed the direction of her gaze. On a distant plain, far below us and to the left, a large black funnel spun like a top. It seemed the source of the roaring sound we had been hearing. The ground appeared to be cracked beneath it. I stared for several minutes, but it did not change in form or position. Finally, I cleared my throat.

"Looks like a big tornado," I said, "not going anyplace..."

Merlin & Fiona, in Sign of Chaos

It's a good bet that somebody is fooling around with Shadow Storms. Somebody from the Courts of Chaos. Quiet as Despil has been, it seems likely that he's been working on his approach to gaining power, and harnessing Shadow Storms might be just his ticket.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [50 Points]

STRENGTH = Amber Rank

ENDURANCE = [10 Points]

WARFARE = Amber Rank

POWERS

"...it is a Chaos phenomenon," Mandor continued. "You could see that in the way it drew upon Chaos when I provided the means. But that pushed it past some limit, and there was a correction. Someone is playing with the primal forces themselves out there. Who or what or why, I cannot say. But I think it's strong testimony that the Pattern isn't involved. Not with Chaos games. So Merlin is probably correct. I think that this business has its origin elsewhere."

Sign of Chaos

Shadow Storm Manipulation [25 Points] - Despil has combined his command of Logrus and Pattern, fusing them together into a primal mastery over Shadow. This enables him to reach out with his Logrus Tendrils and manipulate Shadow Storms.

Pattern Imprint [50 Points] - Despil has secretly taken advantage of his Amber heritage.

Logrus Mastery [45 Points]

Shape Shifting [35 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

Conjuration [20 Points]

CONSTRUCTS

"Hello!" I heard Mandor say, and we both turned in the direction he was facing—back out through the notch.

The dark tornado-form had collapsed to half its former size, and even as we watched, it continued to diminish. It fell steadily in upon itself, shrinking and shrinking, and in about a half minute it was gone, completely.

I could not suppress a smile, but Fiona did not even notice. She was looking at Mandor.

"Do you think it was because of what you did?" she asked him.

"I have no way of knowing," he replied, "but it

may well be."

"But does it tell you anything?" she said.

"Perhaps whoever was responsible did not like having me tinker with his experiment."

"You really believe there's an intelligence behind it?"

"Yes."

"Someone from the Courts?"

"It seems more likely than someone from your end of the world."

Sign of Chaos

Shadow Storm Construct [about 5 Points] - By describing the Shadow Tornado as an "experiment," Mandor is hinting that Despil's creation is a Construct. It likely draws its energy from a huge array of Shadow, and can then cast a Shadow Storm outward along a pathway laid by Despil.

- **Personal Shadow [1 Point]**

- **Countless Quantity Multiplier [*3 Points]**

- **Storm Manifestation [1 Point]** - Follow Shadow Trail.

- **Psychic Sensitivity [1 Point]**

GAME MASTER TIPS FOR ROLE-PLAYING DESPIL

Do as Zelazny does. Keep Despil away from the center of things, off stage. Instead of role-playing Despil as he interacts with the player characters, the Game Master should role-play Despil manipulating things behind the scenes, making moves, manipulating affairs, listening from a distance, and keeping himself well hidden.

DESPIL AS A PLAYER IN THE GAMES OF THE COURTS OF CHAOS

Despil's non-appearance is meaningless. In *Amber* it is often the most subtle player who is the most dangerous. After all, anonymity is a wonderful cloak for intrigue. The fact that Jurt would off-handedly dismiss Despil as a candidate for the throne of the Courts of Chaos means nothing.

Constant Allies & Enemies:

Despil seems to have created himself a position where he has no enemies, and where all his close relatives see him as a neutral observer. This tends to remove Despil from strong suspicions, but would also seem to mean that he has no strong allies.

GILVA

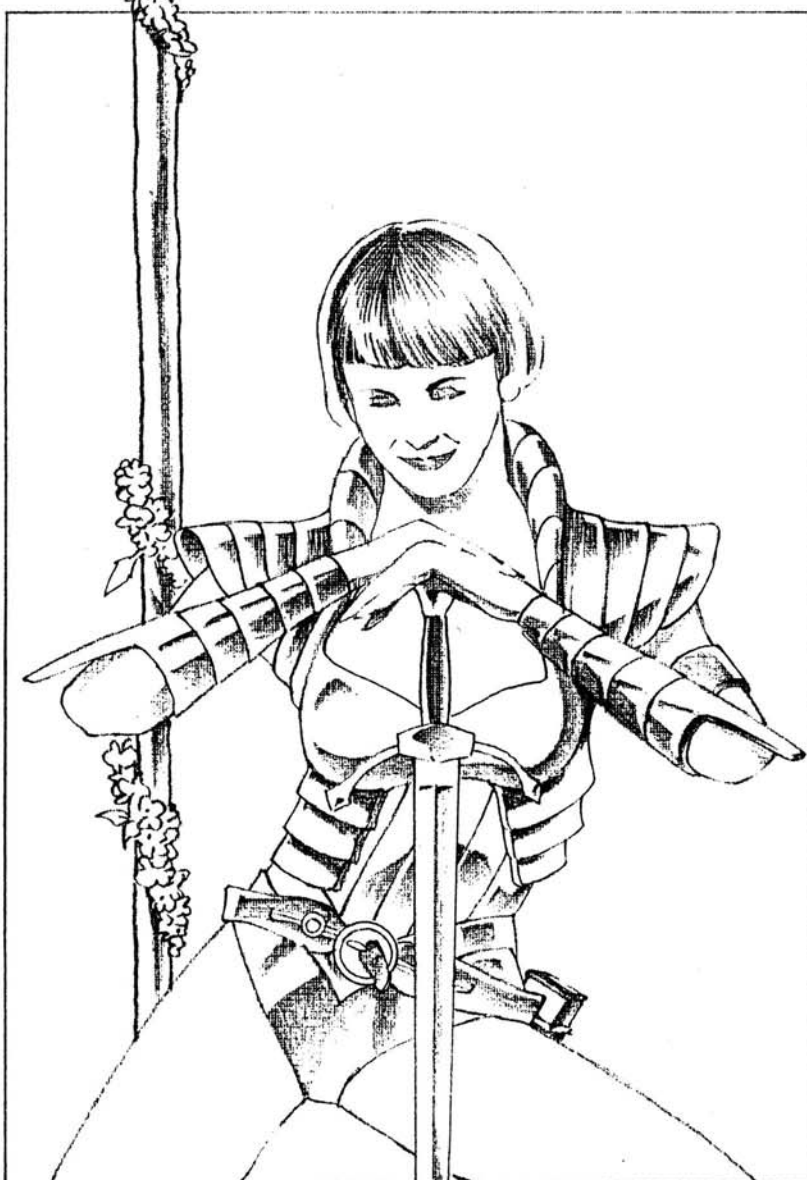
by Joe Saul

As I turned away, I saw a half-familiar face off to my right. She was tall and dark-eyed, and she had been staring at me. I had been trying to recall her name earlier, and had failed. Seeing her brought it back, though. I approached her.

"I have to leave for a time," I said. "But I wanted to say hello, Gilva."

"You do remember. I was wondering."

Prince of Chaos



Tall, dark-eyed, and mercurial, Gilva can go from flirtatious and demure to serious and martial in the blink of an eye. She seems friendly and very willing to help Merlin, but she is quick to defend her family's honor when she thinks he's attacking it. She may be an old—and apparently intimate—friend of his, but other things can take precedence.

Gilva comes off as a cross between a friendly teenager and a battle-hardened commando, good-natured but always ready for trouble—and always conscious of where her duty lies. Though she only appears once, she's one of the most captivating characters we meet in Merlin's Chronicles.

An old flame of Merlin's, Gilva is a friend Merlin can count on in the courts—and probably the only person there he can trust during the succession crisis. It's obvious from the way Gilva acts around Merlin that she still cares about him a great deal; he seems to reciprocate it. Now that Merlin's spending more time in the Courts, Gilva hopes to see more of him.

GILVA— BATTLE-BORN (100 POINT VERSION)

She was a demure and well-bred battle-maid—with over thirty notches on the haft of her broadsword...

Prince of Chaos

Gilva, like the rest of the Hendrakes, is a warrior born and bred, a lover of battle, and an adherent of a strict code of military ethics.

A descendant of Benedict, Gilva is quick to assert her ability and heritage. Treat her like a civilian, or impugn her family's honor, and risk earning her anger.

Current Objectives.

Working on bettering her martial skills, Gilva will be at the forefront of any battle and will attempt to learn what she can from friend or foe. This means she'll need small excuse to enter combat with any interesting opponent.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Amber Rank
STRENGTH = [5 Points]
ENDURANCE = [5 Points]
WARFARE = [38 Points]

POWERS

Shape Shift [35 Points]
Power Words [10 Points] - Magic Negation, Neural Disrupt, Resume True Form, Pattern Negation, and Burst of Psyche.

CREATURES & ARTIFACTS OF POWER

Gilva's Sword, Kyrill [6 Points] - Gilva's sword is a Hendrake heirloom, given to her by Belissa for valor in battle during the Patternfall War.

- **Deadly Damage** [4 Points]
- **Alternate Named and Numbered Forms** [2 Points] - Gilva's arcane blade can assume a number of forms, including that of a broadsword, a small dagger, a staff, a mace, and a battle lance; all these exist in configurations suited both for her demonic form and her human one.

GOOD STUFF

[1 Point]

GILVA—HELL-MAID OF HENDRAKE

(175 POINT VERSION)

She turned away suddenly.

"I am offended," she said, "by what I believe you imply."

"I'm sorry," I said, "but I had to ask."

"Ours is an honorable house," she said. "We accept the fortunes of war. When the fighting is ended, we put it all behind us."

Gilva & Merlin, in Prince of Chaos

Gilva is, first, last, and always, a Hendrake—and heir to that house's martial tradition.

Current Objectives.

She keeps the welfare of her house near the top of her priority list, only one item down from protecting the Courts of Chaos itself.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]
STRENGTH = Amber Rank
ENDURANCE = [10 Points]
WARFARE = [50 Points]

POWERS

Logrus Mastery [45 Points]
Shape Shift [35 Points]
Power Words [10 Points] - Magic Negation, Neural Disrupt, Resume True Form, Pattern Negation, Burst of Psyche
Sorcery [15 Points]

CREATURES & ARTIFACTS OF POWER

Gilva's Sword, Kyrill [10 Points] - actually a Creature of Chaos which has been imbued with certain properties, Kyrill can assume the forms of a variety of weapons in addition to its demonic form of a small, scaled, ape with bat wings and a feline face. Kyrill was given to Gilva when Gilva was a child, as protection; it serves willingly in exchange for blood, adventure, and gossip.

- **Deadly Damage** [4 Points]
- **Alternate Named and Numbered Forms** [2 Points] - Gilva's arcane blade can assume a number of forms, including that of a broadsword, a small dagger, a staff, a mace, and a battle lance; all these exist in configurations suited both for her demonic form and her human one.
- **Extraordinary Psychic Sense** [4 Points]

Gilva's Silver Armor [7 Points]

- **Invulnerable** [4 Points]
- **Alternate Form** [1 Point] - Gilva's armor shifts shape between two forms, one for her human form and the other for her demonic one.
- **Psychic Neutral** [2 Points] - When the helmet is on, and the visor down, the wearer's mind is blocked, even from Trump contact. Outside of actual combat, Gilva tends to carry the helm.

GOOD STUFF

[3 Points]



GILVA—FUTURE QUEEN OF CHAOS

(250 POINT VERSION)

"I would like to serve our next king any way I might," she said. "Though I may not normally speak for our house, I am certain Hendrake would agree to help you bring pressure upon the person responsible."

"Thanks," I said, as we embraced. Her scales were cool. Her fangs would have shredded my human ear, but it was only a nibble in demonform. "I will talk to you again if I need help along those lines."

"Talk to me again, anyway."

It was good to hold and be held for a time, and that is what we did...

Gilva & Merlin,
in *Prince of Chaos*

The ambitions of both Gilva and House Hendrake have converged, driving her to gain the throne by marriage, with the long-term plan of her offspring forming a martial dynasty. Since Merlin has been the subject of a plan to place him on the throne, Gilva has always kept their relationship warm and open.

It is not mere chance that Merlin encounters Gilva at the procession; she went there to find him. Nor is it chance that the Hendrake team sent to retrieve Coral fails. Informed of Merlin's probable accession by her Hendrake kin, Gilva is skillfully positioning herself so that she—not Coral—will be the next Queen of Chaos.

Current Objectives.

First, to put Merlin on the throne. Second to marry him and become Queen of the Courts of Chaos. She'll save any other plans until after she bears his child, and has it acknowledged as heir.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [10 Points]

STRENGTH = [10 Points]

ENDURANCE = [10 Points]

WARFARE = [63 Points]

POWERS

Logrus Mastery [45 Points]

Advanced Shape Shift [65 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

Conjuration [20 Points] - She has the items described above, but gained through Conjuration.

FRIENDS & ALLIES

Chaos Devotees [12 Points] - Gilva has at least three backers within House Hendrake who wish to see her go far.

GAME MASTER TIPS FOR ROLE-PLAYING GILVA

"Why? Why should I forget it? Because I maintain my family's honor?"

"No, because I believe you."

"And?"

"I'll trouble someone else for an opinion."

"Do you mean it's dangerous, and you've decided against asking me?"

"I don't understand it, so it could be dangerous."

"Do you want to offend me again?"

"Heaven forbid!"

Gilva & Merlin, in *Prince of Chaos*

Keep in mind her temper, and also her honor. Gilva is not one to be left on the sidelines. She knows her strengths, and her weaknesses, and she's determined to pitch in where and when she is needed.

GILVA AS A PLAYER IN THE GAMES OF THE COURTS OF CHAOS

"I've got to leave," I said, "fast!"

"Why?"

"Somebody's going to start thinking about the succession in a few moments, and I'm going to be smothered with protection," I told her. "I can't have that, not just now."

"Why not?"

"No time to go into that. But I'd wanted to talk to you. May I borrow you now?"

There were milling bodies all about us.

"Of course, sir," she said, apparently having just thought about the succession.

Prince of Chaos

As a junior member of House Hendrake, Gilva knows her best way to advance is by serving someone as highly ranked as possible. Serving, guarding, protecting, or defending Merlin, seeing that he is the heir to the throne of the Courts of Chaos, is obviously a prize position, and not one that she'll let slip from her grasp. No doubt Gilva isn't wasting any time gathering information, and assembling a strong force, readying herself for the moment when she can step up to Merlin's side as his personal bodyguard.

JASRA

She had on a low over-one-shoulder (the left) white dress, fastened at the shoulder with a diamond pin, and she wore a tiara, also of diamonds, which seemed almost to be radiating in the infrared range amidst her bright hair. She was smiling, and she smelled good, too. Involuntarily I felt myself standing straighter, and I glanced at my fingernails to be certain they were clean.

Knight of Shadows

Historians question whether or not Lucrezia Borgia earned her reputation as a back-stabbing, poisoning, manipulating, seductress. Still, the name Lucrezia Borgia evokes the image of a feminine version of Macchiavelli.

In other words, Jasra is a perfect Lucrezia Borgia. Saying she is *ambitious* isn't saying nearly enough. Jasra will stop at nothing to get what she wants.

And she isn't very nice about it.

It wouldn't be enough for her to simply destroy Merlin. No, it would be perfect if she could destroy Merlin through Julia, through his spurned lover, giving her victim just enough time to realize how thoroughly he'd been hurt.

Jasra isn't above sleeping her way into power, or cheating, or killing, or...

Well, let's just say she does what she has to do to get what she wants.



JASRA—DEMONESS

(75 POINT CHARACTER)

"Gail? Rinaldo's girlfriend? My son was dating a demon?"

"Let's not be prejudiced. He'd done a lot worse his freshman year."

She thought a moment, then nodded slowly.

"You've got a point there," she admitted. "I'd forgotten Carol..."

Knight of Shadows

Wouldn't it be just perfect if Jasra were a demon herself? She disapproves of son Luke's involvement because she's worked so hard to put her low-class past behind her, and it would be infuriating to have her upwardly mobile plans ruined. Her son, on the verge of becoming a king, marrying back down into the inferior social caste, would be maddening.

Jasra as a demon explains her origins near the Courts of Chaos, and her early servitude to Dara. Not to mention the little matter of her poison bite.

Current Objectives.

It's pretty clear that Jasra intends to keep her demonic roots private. Jasra will stay clear of personal involvement in the Courts of Chaos. Otherwise, she'll be intent on building up her independent sources of power.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Amber Rank

STRENGTH = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

ENDURANCE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

WARFARE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

POWERS

"...the bearer of the Eye is a simpler being than Jasra."

Dara, comparing Coral to Jasra, in *Prince of Chaos*

Demon Shape Shifting [15 Points] - As a demon, Jasra's range of shapes are not as extensive as those of a Lord of Chaos. As her innate form is that of a demon, all Jasra's specialized demonic adaptations can be carried over to all other forms. For example, her poison bite, the ability to move along a Logrus pathway (a black road or thread), and an intuitive recognition of other demons.

Adept of the Broken Pattern [25 Points]

Power Words [10 Points] - Magic Negation, Chaos Negation, Neural Disrupt, Pain Attack and Pattern Negation.

Sorcery [15 Points] - Jasra knows all the basic spells and, having been instructed by Dara, likely knows most of those spells as well. See Dara's Book of Spells.

Mantic Manipulation [5 Points] - Jasra has gained the ability to directly manipulate the massive magical energies of the Fount of Power.

Conjuration [20 Points]

ARTIFACTS & CREATURES OF POWER

I saw a large mouthful of big teeth, bloody lips curled back around them. They lined the muzzle belonging to several hundred pounds of doglike creature covered with coarse, moldy-looking yellow fur. Its ears were like clumps of fungi, its yellow-orange eyes wide and feral.

Trumps of Doom

Jasra's Hounds [15 Points] - Victor Melman, the Shadow Earth artist, predicted that Julia would be killed by "a beast from Netzach," so maybe that's what they're called. Bred by Jasra as show animals, they are larger than most hounds, and tougher than most dogs. On the other hand, three of them were killed by Julian's hellhounds, but we weren't told the odds. They leave behind a distinctive three-clawed footprint.

- Horde Quantity [*3 Points]

- Chaos Vitality [2 Points]

- Combat Reflexes [2 Points]

- Extra Hard Claws and Teeth [1 Point]

JASRA—DEMONESS, AND HER POISON BITE

"Who are you?" I snarled.

"Jasra," she spat back, "dead man!"

She opened her mouth wide and her head fell forward. I felt the moist touch of her lips upon the back of my left forearm, which still held her own right wrist against the chair's arm. Seconds later I felt an excruciating pain there. It was not a bite but rather felt as if a fiery nail had been driven into my flesh.

I let go her wrist and jerked my arm away. The movement was strangely slow, weakened. A cold, tingling sensation moved down into the hand and up along the arm. My hand dropped to my side and seemed to go away. She extricated herself easily from my grip, smiled, placed her fingertips lightly upon my chest and pushed.

I fell backward. I was ridiculously weak and I couldn't control my movements. I felt no pain when I struck the floor, and it was a real effort to turn my head to regard her as she rose to her feet.

"Enjoy it," she stated. "After you awaken, the remainder of your brief existence will be painful."

Trumps of Doom

The poison stinger is a part of Jasra's natural demonic form. In other shapes, Jasra carries the stinger on the outside of the body, in some cases having it appear as a scorpion's tail. It is rarely fatal (although anyone of Human Endurance will need an intensive care facility for a few days just to keep breathing), but it is very debilitating.

JASRA—SORCERESS OF THE FOUNT

(100 POINT CHARACTER)

In the center of the room was a black stone fountain, spraying flames—not water—into the air; the fire descended into the font's basin, where it swirled and danced. The flames were red and orange in the air, white and yellow below, rippling. A feeling of power filled the chamber. Anyone who could control the forces loose in this place would be a formidable opponent indeed.

Blood of Amber

The power of the place is just too tempting.

Jasra, having seized the Keep of the Four Worlds, uses it as a base for all of her strategies and plans. After all, as mistress of the Fount of Power, she has access to one of Shadow's greatest sources of magical energy.

Current Objectives.

First and foremost, Jasra will secure the Keep of the Four Worlds. She'll manipulate the surrounding Shadow to place barriers against future visitors (or invaders). It may be decades before Jasra feels secure enough to expand her influence more widely.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [9 Points]

STRENGTH = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

ENDURANCE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

WARFARE = Amber Rank

POWERS

Adept of the Broken Pattern [25 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points] - as above.

Mantic Manipulation [5 Points] - as above.

Conjuration [20 Points]

ARTIFACTS & CREATURES OF POWER

Jasra's Hounds [10 Points] - As above, but fewer.

- Named & Numbered Quantity [*2 Points]
- Chaos Vitality [2 Points]
- Combat Reflexes [2 Points]
- Extra Hard Claws and Teeth [1 Point]

CONSTRUCTS

"Bathing a person in it will, if he's properly protected, do wonders for strength, stamina, and magical abilities. That part's easy for a person with some training to learn. I've been through it myself. But old Sharu's notes were in his lab, and there was something more in them—a way of replacing part of the body with energy, really packing it in. Very dangerous. Easily fatal. But if it works you get something special, a kind of superman, a sort of living Trump."

Luke, in *Sign of Chaos*

Fount of Power [32 Points] - Jasra has control over the Fount, especially since she has installed the defeated mage, Sharu Garrul, as her personal guardian. Aside from controlling the raw power of the place, anyone who bathes in the Fount, receiving either the lesser or greater infusion, is ultimately subject to Jasra's control. In other words, she can either shut them off from their source of power, or deny them access when they need a recharge.

- **Keep of the Four Worlds [2 Point]**
 - **Named & Numbered Quantity [*2 Points]**
 - **Personal Shadow [1 Point]**
- **Fount of Power Manifestation [30 Points]**
 - **Transfer Amber Vitality [9 Points]**
 - **Transfer Amber Stamina [7 Points]**
 - **Transfer Magical Power [14 Points]**

JASRA—SORCERESS OF THE FOUNT, AND HER POISON BITE

...I heard Jurt say, "A fool in all places? What about close quarters?" and I looked up in time to see him appear before Jasra and seize hold of her.

A moment later he screamed, as Jasra lowered her head and her lips touched his forearm. She pushed him away then, and he fell down the remaining steps, landing stiffly, not moving.

Sign of Chaos

Poison Symbiote [4 Points] - Jasra has persuaded a small creature, perhaps a demon, to take up residence in her body. It operates as a second tongue, and she uses it both as a Psychic defense, and to inject poison into her enemies.

- **Psychic Barrier [4 Points]**

JASRA—WIFE OF BRAND (125 POINT VERSION)

"Well, she snared herself an Amberite—the prince called Brand," he said. "Rumor had it they met over some magical operation and it was love at first blood. She wanted to keep him, and I've heard it said they actually were married in a secret ceremony. But he wasn't interested in the throne of Kashfa, though he was the only one she might have been willing to see on it."

Blood of Amber

From Jasra's point of view, she is a Princess of Amber, by marriage, and her son is heir to the throne of Amber, by blood. That her husband was killed (no doubt by the treachery of his siblings) doesn't change her own ambitions.

From Brand she has learned many secrets. Some she has already applied, some she has passed on to her son. But there are others, more dangerous, that she is keeping in reserve. Perhaps for the next gullible Amberite who chances to be her guest.

Current Objectives.

Her son on the throne of Kashfa, Merlin on the throne of the Courts of Chaos. These things are very satisfying. Yet she won't rest until she's somehow the power behind the throne in Amber itself.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [15 Points]
STRENGTH = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]
ENDURANCE = Amber Rank
WARFARE = [14 Points]

POWERS

Adept of the Broken Pattern [25 Points]
Shape Shifting [35 Points]
Sorcery [15 Points] - As above.
Mantic Manipulation [5 Points] - As above.
Conjuration [20 Points]

PERSONAL SHADOWS AND WAYS

We emerged from behind a stack of barrels into what appeared to be a very well-stocked wine cellar. Mandor paused after six paces and carefully removed a dusty bottle from the rack to our left. He drew a corner of his cloak across its label.

"Oh, my!" he observed.

"What is it?" Jasra inquired.

"If this is still good, I can build an unforgettable meal around it."

"Really? Better bring several to be sure then," she said. "These go back before my time—perhaps before Sharu's time even."

"Merlin, you bring these two," he said, passing me a pair. "Carefully, now."

He studied the rest of the rack before selecting two more, which he carried himself.

"I can see why this place is often under siege," he remarked to Jasra. "I'd have been inclined to have a go at it myself had I known about this part."

Knight of Shadows

Keep of the Four Worlds [6 Points] - Customized by herself and Brand, the Keep is a complete domain, furnished with every necessity, and staffed by a range of servants. The Keep also gives her control over the Fount of Power.

- **Personal Shadow [1 Point]**

- **Guarded [4 Points]** - Includes Jasra's Hounds (see above).

- **Control of Time flow [1 Point]**

JASRA—WIFE OF BRAND, AND HER POISON BITE

"When I told you my story back in Amber I omitted the part where Jasra bit me, and I was barely able to trump out because of some sort of poison she seemed to have injected. It left me numb, paralyzed and very weak for a long while."

She shook her head. "Kashfans can't do anything like that. But then, of course, Jasra is not a Kashfan."

Merlin & Flora, in Blood of Amber

By careful experimentation, Jasra has learned to Shape Shift the right organs to simulate a poison stinger. The attack mechanism itself is fairly simple, something like a frog's tongue sharpened to a hollow point. It was much more difficult to generate poison glands, capable of secreting a range of paralytic solutions. She has several

glands so, for example, if she injects Merlin a second time, it will be with a different poison, one to which he could not have developed immunity.

GAME MASTER TIPS FOR ROLE-PLAYING JASRA

"...Matters of the heart are either very simple or totally inscrutable to me," she said. "There doesn't seem to be a middle ground."

Jasra, in Knight of Shadows

Mostly Jasra should be maintained as a background character. One who pulls strings, sends agents, and does her dirty work by remote control.

When Jasra does appear in person, she should be haughty, yet willing to negotiate. She can hardly meet anyone without considering how to draw them into her plans, how to use them efficiently, and how to make them a pawn.

JASRA AS MOTHER

"I'd check out his apartment periodically."

"When he wasn't around?"

"Of course. A mother's privilege."

I shuddered...

Jasra & Merlin, in Knight of Shadows

Merlin reacts rather badly to Jasra's motherly prerogatives, perhaps comparing her to his own mother, Dara.

Which isn't really a bad comparison. Dara and Jasra each have high ambitions for their children, and seem to be willing to go to extremes to see those ambitions fulfilled.

However, where Dara murders on behalf of her sons, removing a fair number of claimants who stand between Merlin and the throne, without bothering them with the details, and sends covert agents out as spies and bodyguards, Jasra is more direct. She mostly works with her son Luke, so that they share their grisly task of revenge, even to the point of allowing Luke to pull the trigger (or throw the bomb), when it comes down to the actual killing.

Should there be any other children of Jasra, by Brand or by another father, she will likely train and educate them in a similar way.

JASRA AS PLAYER IN THE GAMES OF THE AMBER COURT

"She'll argue, but of course she'll agree," he said. "It'll be a step up in the world. And she'll want revenge on Mask as much as that piece of her former holdings. But to answer your question, don't trust her. No matter what she promises, she'll never be happy with less than she had before. She'll be scheming. She'll be a good ally till the job's done. Then you've got to think about protecting against her."

Rinaldo, about his mother Jasra,
in *Sign of Chaos*

Now that Luke has been accepted by the Court of Amber, or at least by Queen Vialle, Jasra will likely turn her attention in that direction.

The first order of business will be to gain whatever inheritance Prince Brand may have left behind, for herself and for Luke. Should she encounter resistance because of Brand's actions prior to his death, she'll be happy to provide "proof" that he was not in his right mind, and that his insanity should not prevent Luke, as Brand's son, from receiving his due.

After the little matter of her acceptance at Court is out of the way, Jasra will likely turn her attention to finding another husband. She has been married to a Prince of Amber in the past, and there are few others who can match the kind of power and opportunity that such a relationship provides. The only question is, who among them will be suitable...



JASRA AS PLAYER IN THE GAMES OF THE COURTS OF CHAOS

"Yeah," I said, "and no one I asked seemed to know where Jasra came from. Still, the Courts... She's a long way from home."

"Actually, she was recruited from a nearby shadow," he explained, "like this one."

"Recruited?"

"Yes, she worked as a servant for a number of years—I think she was fairly young when she started—at the Ways of Helgram."

"Helgram? That's my mother's House!"

"Right. She was a maid-companion to the Lady Dara. That's where she learned the Arts."

"Jasra got her instruction in sorcery from my mother? And she met Brand at Helgram? That would make it seem Helgram had something to do with Brand's plot, the Black Road, the war—"

Prince of Chaos

She certainly keeps up with news about the Courts of Chaos. For example, when just released from her imprisonment as a stone statue, with less than a half-hour to herself, she somehow came up with an update on Merlin's status that revealed his nearness to the throne.

Such interest is unlikely to come unless Jasra has plans in that direction. No doubt she belongs to some factions and opposes others. Given that she is now on fairly cordial terms with Merlin, or at least believes him to be controllable, and given that Merlin's friendship with Luke may serve as an important asset, Jasra will try to get Merlin to the throne, and to keep him there.

Constant Allies & Enemies:

"Never trust—that's her motto, I think."

Luke, Sign of Chaos

The old adage, 'whatever goes around, comes around,' fits Jasra perfectly.

Jasra has back-stabbed just about everyone who ever helped her, including her old teachers Dara and Sharu Garrul. Which made it only just when she was defeated by her own protegee, Julia Barnes.

It's doubtful that any Prince of Amber would trust Brand's widow, and Princess Florimel punches Jasra right in the snoot the second she sees her. Her son Luke is her only reliable ally, but even he doesn't completely trust Jasra.

JULIA BARNES

"...Julia really had talent. A few lessons from Victor, and she was better than he was at anything he could do—except painting. Hell! Maybe she paints, too. I don't know. I'd dealt myself a wild card, and it played itself."

Jasra, in *Knight of Shadows*

Talk about a woman scorned!

Julia Barnes knows how to work herself up to a hellish fury. If frustrated or denied, especially if someone treats her as a fool or a dummy, she's capable of anything. It

could take years, a whole new career path, or a pact with the devil, but she *will* gain power.

Once Julia gains the power she seeks, forget about "living well is the best revenge." No simple "I told you so" for Julia Barnes. Her style is to hit back, hit hard, and hit below the belt.

Merlin made the mistake of underestimating Julia, and so did Jasra. They both paid for their arrogance.

Julia had her revenge. Turning Jasra to stone, she seized control of Brand's legacy, the Fount of Power.

When it was Merlin's turn, she twisted him like a paper doll, forcing him to feel guilt, guilt, and more guilt.

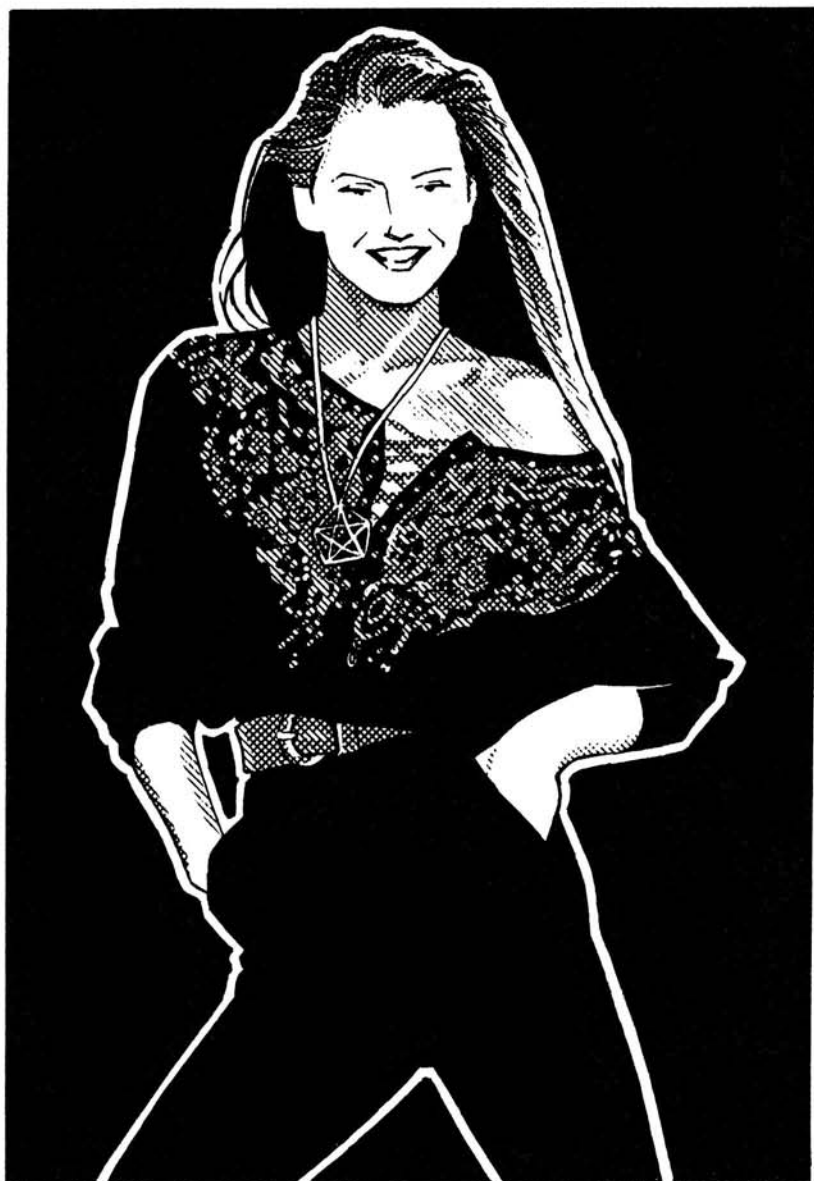
JULIA BARNES— CYBERNETIC SORCERESS (ZERO POINT VERSION)

"Julia studied with a variety of teachers after you two broke up," she began. "Once I hit upon the plan, it was a simple matter to cause them to do or say things which would disillusion or discourage her and set her to looking for someone else. It was not long before she came to Victor, who was already under our tutelage. I ordered him to sweeten her stay and skip many of the usual preliminaries and to proceed to teaching her about an initiation I had chosen for her..."

Jasra, to Merlin,
in *Knight of Shadows*

Knowledge is power.

On the lowest level, if you know a fact, or a bunch of facts, and others don't, you've got power. On a higher level, if you know how to organize facts, how to fit them into a system that makes sense, in a way superior to how others think, then you've got a lot of power.



Sorceresses, like Jasra and Dara, have a lot of spells. Since it's mentioned that Julia was working for a computer software company, it's possible that Julia may be a superior sorceress.

Julia has the advantage of an education that includes a renaissance in computer programming. Ideas from computer design and theory, on Shadow Earth, are changing the way that scientists look at everything from astrophysics to zoology. There's no reason why practitioners of the mystic arts couldn't likewise benefit from programming ideas. Merlin, for example, describes his magic spells as "edited," "collated," and "assembled."

Unlike any other known spell-caster, Julia knew computers before she was introduced to the workings of magic. Even Merlin, a respectable programmer, started with the disadvantage of having learned spells in the traditional way. From this unique perspective, as Jasra put it, Julia had "a flair for everything..."

It's also interesting that Julia's first teachers were frauds and charlatans. In other words, before she learned about any real power, she had to be skeptical and analytical. Instead of assuming that her teachers were all-knowing, Julia came to question things, and to think of herself as capable of inventing better ways of doing things.

Think about how magic seems to work. A programmer, someone who might have studied little ditties like structured design and system analysis, would have a tremendous advantage in learning some of the more advanced aspects of magic. All she'd need would be a personal computer, and a decent software compiler, and she'd be able to "parse" through thousands of variables every time she learned some new aspect of spell casting.

It sure would explain how Julia took Jasra by surprise.

Current Objectives.

Applying Shadow Earth ideas to spell casting is just one step in Julia's master plan. Now that she knows about Ghostwheel, the Trump Computer, she'll start thinking really big. From Jurt's chambers, in the Ways of Sawall, Shadow itself will be easy to "program." Julia's next step will be to start investigating both the Logrus and the Pattern, asking herself, "if the Logrus and Pattern are artificial creations, as intelligent as Ghostwheel, there must be a way I can reprogram them to serve me."

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

STRENGTH = Human Rank [+25 Points]

ENDURANCE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

WARFARE = Human Rank [+25 Points]

POWERS

Adept of the Broken Pattern [25 Points]

Power Words [10 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

Conjuration [20 Points]

JULIA BARNES— TAINTED BY THE BLOOD (50 POINT VERSION)

"Do you know about your blood type?"

"It's an exotic. But you can treat it as an AB Positive for all practical purposes. I can take anything, but don't give mine to anybody else."

*Dr. Morris Baile & Corwin,
in Sign of the Unicorn*

I removed my hand from the incision, held the wrist above it again, pumped my fist.

"Hey, man. You're losing a lot of blood there. I feel okay now. Was just a little dizzy, that's all. I don't need any more."

"Yes, you do," I said. "Believe me. I gave a lot more than this in a blood drive once and ran in a meet the next day. It's okay."

*Rinaldo-Ghost & Merlin,
in Prince of Chaos*

"Mom, Dad," she said, in her first clear words after regaining consciousness. "I've decided to go to school out in California."

"Darling?" Her words barely registering above their worry over her condition. "Do you know where you are?"

"Of course, I'm in the hospital. Nowhere else smells quite like it."

"Do you remember the accident?"

"Yes," Julia looked down at her bandages and her elevated leg cast, "and I've decided on UCLA, Berkeley Campus..."

What if Julia were the recipient of Merlin's generosity? What if she had been given some of his blood? It would explain a heck of a lot...

You can also add in the donor matching factor. Hospitals don't give blood randomly. Julia's blood type would have had to already be similar to Merlin's in some way. And, given that elder Amberites, and perhaps Lords of Chaos as well, have been visiting Shadow Earth for centuries, it's possible that some of their descendants may carry trace amounts of their genetic heritage.

Or, what if Merlin's blood, the powerful blood of a Shape Shifter, has come alive in Julia's body? Inadvertently, Julia may be a creature of Merlin's own blood, complete with at least some measure of his powers. As a Shape-Shifted creature, it constantly, subconsciously, urges Julia to seek out Merlin. Hungry for instructions, for completion of some kind, the part of Julia that is the creature is constantly baffled by Merlin's indifference.

Current Objectives.

Julia can never really be totally free of her attraction for Merlin (at least not until Merlin recognizes the problem). She'll try to get close to Merlin, even if it means messing up her relationship with Jurt.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Amber

STRENGTH = Chaos [+10 Points]

ENDURANCE = Chaos [+10 Points]

WARFARE = Chaos [+10 Points]

POWERS

Adept of the Broken Pattern [25 Points]

Blood Creature Shape Shifting [15 Points] - Without being aware of it, Julia has a measure of Merlin's Powers. Outwardly, Julia won't change, but she will be able to adapt to different Shadow conditions, and may even be able to (involuntarily) shift her Attributes to match her current situation.

Sorcery [15 Points]

Conjuration [20 Points]

GOOD STUFF

[5 Points]

JULIA BARNES— LOST PRINCESS OF AMBER (100 POINT VERSION)

"And you never noticed any indication of her talent?" Jasra ventured.

"I wouldn't say that," I replied as I began to realize why things were as they were. "No, I wouldn't say that."

...Like that time at Baskin-Robbins when she caused a change of flavors 'twixt cone and lip. Or the storm she'd stayed dry in without an umbrella....

Knight of Shadows

Merlin Corey, Luke Reynard and Gail Lampron, those were Julia's companions at Berkeley. Likely the most mysterious trio on campus, each with very good reasons never to talk about their past, their families, or their real roots. Is it possible that Julia ended up with this odd trio because she had secrets of her own?

After all, anyone with half a brain is going to realize that claiming to be immortal, much less owning up to supernatural powers, is not a good way to make friends and influence people here on Shadow Earth. Over the years she has become as secretive as any of the other three.

Even before she was initiated onto a way of Power she was able to exert her will upon Shadow in subtle ways.

Was Merlin stupid for donating blood?

Probably not. It's likely, given the advances between the 1960 era medicine (presumably when Corwin was last in a Shadow Earth hospital), and those of twenty years later, that Merlin had reason to believe that donating blood was not only harmless, but downright helpful.

You see, there have been a lot of changes in how blood is handled.

Except in very rare instances, patients no longer receive whole blood (the raw mix that comes out of the donor into the blood bag). Instead the donated blood is turned into "packed cells"—into just the red blood cells used to carry oxygen, but without the serum or plasma.

Normally (though we don't know what is exactly normal for someone with the blood of Amber, much less for a Shape Shifter), red blood cells don't reproduce, and they generally live only for about one hundred and twenty days. Assuming that Merlin's red blood cells have the usual Amber superiority, they'd be superior at carrying oxygen, and would also be pretty much invulnerable to any disease. That means the patient who receives them will likely do very, very well, and will likely heal quickly. No harm done.

Merlin would also feel comforted knowing that hospitals are now very careful about "cross-matching," checking the reaction between the recipient's serum and the donor's cells in a series of test-tube experiments. It would be another safety measure, ensuring that his blood wouldn't be injected into the wrong patient.

The only problem is that the systems for treating blood, for creating packed cells, aren't 100% foolproof. It's possible for lymphocytes to get into the mix. And the problem with lymphocytes is that they can reproduce. That could be bad. And, if Merlin was basing his decision on the basis of the information in the brochures at the blood donor station, he might not know about the risks.

After all, changing the flavor of an ice cream cone, or being lucky enough to stay dry in the rain, are second nature to Amberites.

Given the number of Amberites who had occasion to visit Shadow Earth, it's just about inevitable that a few of their offspring are wandering around.

Current Objectives.

For the first time in her life, Julia has more options that she can deal with. For the time being, safe in Jurt's care, in House Sawall, she'll take the time to think about different possibilities.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [10 Points]

STRENGTH = Amber

ENDURANCE = Amber

WARFARE = Amber

POWERS

Adept of the Broken Pattern [25 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

FRIENDS & ALLIES

Amber Devotee [6 points] - By now, word of her existence having spread, it's likely that she has been recognized as some Amberite's child. As a careful elder, her father or mother (or grandparent, or great-grandparent) will bide their time, spending a few decades checking things out, before coming forward for any tearful reunion. Julia's parent will keep a close eye on her progress, and will not hesitate to manipulate events (stealthily, from a distance) to protect her. If she is the offspring of Brand, it seems likely that Bleys and Fiona might conspire in this role, each wary, each somewhat less "devoted," but together serving the same parental role.

ADVANCEMENT POINTS

[+44 Points] - At a cross-roads in her life, Julia is ready to walk the Pattern, and might well do so if given the opportunity. Or she might pursue Trump. Yet she also has enough "potential" to become a Shape Shifter, and her current alliance with Jurt, in the Ways of Sawall, provides an excellent opportunity. If that comes about, she may even acquire Logrus Mastery, saving her initiation into Pattern for a later time. Here are some of her choices:

- **Walk the Pattern.** Cost: 25 Points
- **Learn Trump Artistry.** Cost: 40 Points
- **Pick up Conjuraton.** Cost: 20 Points
- **Learn Shape Shift.** Cost: 35 Points

GAME MASTER TIPS FOR ROLE-PLAYING JULIA BARNES

Julia laughed. "What's wrong with a power trip?" she asked. "It sounds like fun to me."

"Only till you run into a greater power," Luke said.

"Then you have to think big," Julia answered.

"That's not right," Gail said. "One has duties and they come first."

Luke was studying her now, and he nodded.

"You can keep morality out of it," Julia said.

Blood of Amber

When Merlin took Julia through Shadow, he perhaps inadvertently triggered her own latent magical abilities. She felt the twinge and knew it to be real, and when Merlin denied her that, she sought power elsewhere. This resentment at being rejected drove her for some time, and twisted her thoughts into ugliness and pain. Her relationship with Jurt strengthened those feelings. If encountered while she is still trying to avenge herself upon Merlin, she will be imperious and overconfident, mocking and revelling in what power she holds.

After her vendetta ended, Julia became much more friendly, and is now working on controlling the powers which she attained too quickly. She is eager to seek out new venues of power, and will curb her natural independent nature until her curiosity is satisfied.

JULIA BARNES AS MOTHER

As Merlin's long-time lover it would be even more chilling if he broke up with Julia just after she discovered herself to be pregnant. Once Julia gained the ability to move around in Shadow, she could have found a suitable fast-time Shadow, and her offspring could now be full-grown. So, it's possible that a new player character could end up as Julia's child, with either Merlin or Jurt as father.

Constant Allies & Enemies:

So far Julia can only count on Jurt as a dependable ally, but she can also count on Jasra as an enemy with a score to settle.

JULIA'S BOOK OF SPELLS

Julia is still a novice at spell-casting, and her range of spells is quite limited. In addition to the basics, and those that she took from Jasra (since Jasra learned magic from Dara, Julia might have others from Dara's Books of Spells), she's managed to assemble some very original spells.

...Mask hit me with a Klaxon spell which temporarily deafened me while bursting blood vessels in my nose.

Sign of Chaos

Audio Blast

A pretty simple spell, but effective. All it does is generate a massive amount of noise. Coming from Shadow Earth, Julia can tailor the spell to create noises that would be very strange to anyone not used to technological noise.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Casting Time: Thirty Minutes.

Lynchpins: Additional five minutes casting time each. Magic of Shadow, Volume (Optional), Dispel (Optional), Sound Effect (Optional-klaxon, siren, factory whistle, rock band, etc.)

...burst about me like fireworks: flowers, flowers, flowers. Violets, anemones, daffodils, roses...

Blood of Amber

Floral Delivery

This is Julia's "signature" spell, the first one she designed on her own. Simply, it dumps a load of flowers.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Casting Time: Thirty Minutes.

Lynchpins: Additional five minutes casting time each. Magic of Shadow, Name of Shadow Destination, Type of flower (Optional, unless specified the result will be a mixed bouquet), Quantity (Optional).

There was no reply, but the air about me was suddenly filled with sharp, spinning shapes—knives, ax blades, throwing stars, broken bottles. I spoke the word for my final defense, the Curtain of Chaos, raising a chittering, smoky screen about us. The sharp items hurtling in our direction were instantly reduced to cosmic dust on coming into contact with it.

Sign of Chaos

Gyrating Blades

By modifying her flower spell, Julia has come up with an original means of attack. It's not likely to be lethal, and someone of Amber Rank in Warfare should be able to deflect most of the attack, but it is distracting.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Casting Time: Thirty Minutes.

Lynchpins: Additional five minutes casting time each. Magic of Shadow, Name of Shadow Destination (Optional), Speed of Projectile Rotation (Optional), Density of Projectiles (Optional).

Years ago, as an undergraduate, I had tried some LSD. It had scared me so badly that I'd never tried another hallucinogen since. It wasn't simply a bad trip. The stuff had affected my shadow-shifting ability. It is kind of a truism that Amberites can visit any place they can imagine, for everything is out there, somewhere, in Shadow. By combining our minds with motion we can tune for the shadow we desire. Unfortunately, I could not control what I was imagining. Also unfortunately, I was transported to those places. I panicked, and that only made it worse. I could easily have been destroyed, for I wandered through the objectified jungles of my subconscious and passed some time in places where the bad things dwell. After I came down I found my way back home, turned up whimpering on Julia's doorstep, and was a nervous wreck for days. Later, when I told Random about it, I learned that he had had some similar experiences. He had kept it to himself at first as a possible secret weapon against the rest of the family; but later, after they'd gotten back onto decent terms with each other, he had decided to share the information in the interest of survival. He was surprised to learn then that Benedict, Gérard, Fiona, and Bleys knew all about it—though their knowledge had come from other hallucinogens and, strangely, only Fiona had ever considered its possibility as an in-family weapon...

Sign of Chaos

Hallucinogenic Injection

Both Luke and Dalt were slipped doses of LSD, or something with an equivalent punch, most likely delivered magically by Julia. After all, Julia has made a career of studying Merlin's weaknesses. The spell causes the drug to be instantly inserted into the bloodstream of the target. Her pharmacopeia has expanded with her travels through Shadow. She is also capable of spiking a drink or lying about the contents of a pill.

Spell Type: Invasive.

Base Casting Time: Two Hours.

Lynchpins: Additional ten minutes of casting time each. Name/Description of Target, Magic of Shadow, Type of Drug (Optional—she can substitute other chemicals instead of LSD), Dosage (Optional—can range from a tiny amount to one fatal to those with Human Endurance).

JURT

"Well, he's nasty. But he's kind of clumsy, too. At least, he's screwed up whenever we've fought and left a piece of himself behind."

Merlin, in *Sign of Chaos*

Not fair, Merlin, not fair at all.

Yes, Jurt is clumsy. He stumbles, over his words, and other things. He's also young.

Besides, Merlin, what about Dara? If she's so awful, so difficult, so exasperating for you, the golden boy, the smart one in the family, what must she be like for Jurt?

Yeah, Jurt is brash, and he makes a lot of mistakes. Picking fights he can't handle isn't too bright.

On the other hand, Jurt says what he thinks. A not too tactful thing to do, especially when Jurt admits that he's untrustworthy, and that he wouldn't get along with a duplicate of himself.

Merlin, if Jurt admits he wouldn't get along with his own Ghost, why are you so surprised that he can't get along with you?

First, you don't take Jurt seriously. You talk to him as if he were a naughty little kid, and as if you were ready to offer a spanking. Not the brightest way to deal with the baby of the family.

Second, remember when the Ghost of Jurt told you how he started practicing when he heard you were running in college? Jurt didn't want to kill you, Merlin, he just wanted to beat you.

So, Merlin, lighten up. Plenty of brothers fight. Usually they get over it.



THE GHOST OF JURT.

...The real Jurt knows things I do not and has powers I don't possess. But I have his memories up through his taking the Logrus, and I'm the second greatest authority there is on the way he thinks. Now, if he's become such a threat as you've indicated, you might find me more than a little useful when it comes to second-guessing him."

"You have a point," I acknowledged. "Unless, of course, the two of you were to throw in together."

He shook his head.

"He wouldn't trust me," he said, "and I wouldn't trust him. We'd both know better. A matter of introspection. See what I mean?"

"It means neither one of you is trustworthy."

His brow furrowed; then he nodded.

"Yeah, I guess so," he said.

Prince of Chaos

The imitation Jurt that Merlin encountered during his "trial," in that place known as the Underdark, became pretty real. It's also interesting that the real Jurt started befriending Merlin, after a life-long feud, not long after Jurt's Ghost arrived at an understanding with Merlin.

So, there's the possibility that Jurt's Ghost is still walking around somewhere. A variant on this theory is presented with each of the three versions of Jurt. Which Ghost of Jurt may exist, if any exist at all, is an interesting decision for the Game Master.

JURT—PRINCE OF CHAOS (150 POINT VERSION)

"So, what does it feel like?"

"What?" I said.

"The power," he answered. "The Logrus power—to walk in Shadow, to work with a higher order of magic than the mundane."

I didn't really want to go into detail, because I knew he'd prepared himself to traverse the Logrus on three different occasions and had backed down at the last moment each time, when he'd looked into it. Perhaps the skeletons of failures that Suhuy keeps around had troubled him also. I don't think that Jurt was aware that I knew about the last two times he'd changed his mind. So I decided to downplay my accomplishment.

"Oh, you don't really feel any different," I said, "until you're actually using it. Then it's hard to describe."

"I'm thinking of doing it soon myself," he said.

"It would be good to see something of Shadow, maybe even find a kingdom for myself somewhere."

Merlin & Jurt, in Blood of Amber

Jurt finally got what he wants. He's mastered the Logrus, and the Fount of Power to boot. Merlin finally treats him with a little respect, and seems to even need his services. He even realizes that he doesn't want the kind of political power that comes with running either House Sawall or the Courts of Chaos.

And then there's Julia...

Jurt is ready to settle down.

Current Objectives.

"Just for once I'd like to be on the winning side," he stated. "I'm not sure I care about right or wrong. They're very arguable quantities. I'd just like to be in with the guys who win for a change..."

Jurt, in Prince of Chaos

After all the disappointments and frustrations in Jurt's life, he's finally on the verge of happiness. He and Julia have together graduated from their vendettas and wars. Having switched to being a supporter of Merlin, the man who will be King of the Courts of Chaos, Jurt is on the winning side.

ATTRIBUTES•NORMAL

PSYCHE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

STRENGTH = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

ENDURANCE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

WARFARE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

ATTRIBUTES•FOUNT-CHARGED

PSYCHE = Amber Rank

STRENGTH = Amber Rank

ENDURANCE = Amber Rank

WARFARE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

POWERS

"...That power you gained in the Fountain," I said, "gives you something I've heard referred to as a 'living Trump' effect. Seems to me you were able to transport Julia as well as yourself with it."

He nodded.

"Can it get us from here to Kashifa in a hurry?"

The distant sound of an enormous gong filled the air.

"I can do anything the cards can do," he said, "and I can take someone along with me. The only

problem is that the Trumps themselves don't have that range. I'd have to take us there in a series of jumps."

Prince of Chaos

Elevated Trump Artistry [65 Points] - By bathing in the Fount of Power, Jurt's Attributes and Powers received a massive charge. For a time, Jurt's Psyche, Strength, and Endurance were all effectively raised to an Amber level. He can regain those ranks if he can get another bath. A more permanent result of the energies of the Fount was that Jurt gained the ability to instantly Trump to whatever image he pictured in his mind, with no need of Trump cards. When he first came out of the Fount, he was able to do it continuously, flicking from one place to another, seemingly without effort.

Later on, as the raw power ebbed away, Jurt was left with the basic knowledge of how to act like a "Living Trump." Using his normal Attributes, he can do the trick, but it takes the same kind of concentration as contacting a Trump, so it's always somewhat tiring.

Logrus Mastery [45 Points]

Shape Shifting [35 Points]

Power Words [10 Points] - Burst of Psyche, Pain Attack, Psychic Defense, Process Snuff, and Process Surge.

Sorcery [15 Points]

Conjuration [20 Points]

JURT—PRINCE OF CHAOS, AND JURT'S GHOST.

"You mean that all I am is some sort of recording?" He looked as if he were about to cry. "Everything seemed so glorious just a little while ago. I'd made it through the Logrus. All of Shadow lay at my feet." He massaged his temples...

Knight of Shadows

Dead. Jurt's Logrus-Ghost was consumed by the crack in the Broken Pattern. This happened when he stepped off the lines, and threw himself into an attack against Merlin's Logrus-Ghost. Instantly Jurt's Ghost was reabsorbed by the Logrus.

Later, when Jurt was energized by the Fount of Power, and when he got around to summoning the Logrus in his energized state, he was able to sense another image of himself within the Logrus. Curious, because the other image seemed different, with different memories, he investigated.

Jurt "replayed" the memories of his twin's encounter with Merlin.

The timing wasn't wonderful, since Jurt was at his most manic, his personality most disrupted by his Fount-bath. At first, Jurt regarded the Jurt-Ghost's memories with

scorn. Later, licking his wounds, caring for the wounded Julia, he let the full implication of the new memories sink in. Which, in turn, led to his patching things up with Merlin.

As for the Jurt-Ghost, it's even possible that Jurt, when he was bristling with power from the Fount, may have recreated it. Or that the Logrus-Ghost, somehow made self-aware from Jurt's touch, or from a remnant of Merlin's blood, or both, may have found a way to manifest itself.

JURT—SON OF CORWIN (200 POINT VERSION)

"...is it necessary for me to point out that Jurt—apart from his scars and missing pieces—bears you a strong resemblance?"

"Jurt? Me? You've got to be kidding!"

He glanced at Jasra.

"He is right," she said. "It's obvious the two of you are related."

I put down my fork and shook my head.

"Preposterous," I said, more in self-defense than as a matter of certainty. "I never noticed."

Mandor shrugged, very slightly.

"You want a lecture on the psychology of denial?" Jasra asked me.

Knight of Shadows

Now let's get this straight.

Merlin, so we are told, is a close match to his old man, Corwin. Jurt, according to a bunch of people who ought to know, looks just like Merlin. Yet supposedly Dara had Merlin by Corwin, and Jurt by Lord Gramble of Sawall.

An elderly, infirm Gramble.

Let's also bear in mind that Dara is a Shapeshifter, a sorceress, and someone not adverse to the occasional plot or scheme. It's not difficult to imagine her pulling a bit of cuckoldry on the Lord Sawall.

How?

There are plenty of female animals who only need to mate once in their lives, and then go on to get pregnant at several different times. They either store the sperm, or fertilized eggs, and biologically activate them when conditions are right for bearing young. Or, for an even simpler solution, remember that Dara had Corwin locked up in her own private dungeon.

Besides, if Jurt is another son of Amber, another son of Corwin, it would explain why Corwin's Pattern was so willing to take on Jurt as one of its guardians.

Which sort of winds back to answering why Dara would want another of Corwin's kids. If Corwin's Pattern is as important as it seems, each child of Corwin provides yet another potential key.

Not that Jurt is necessarily aware of any of this...



Current Objectives.

Jurt stared at the Pattern.

"That's my dad's edition," I said.

"I could have guessed that," Jurt told me...

Prince of Chaos

Once Jurt learns of his true parenthood, and after he has a chance to cool down and consider the consequences, he's likely to want to claim his fair share of his father's inheritance. That means he'll want to meet Corwin, he'll want to learn more about Amber, and he'll definitely want a part in the long-term defense of Corwin's Pattern.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Amber Rank

STRENGTH = Amber Rank

ENDURANCE = [15 Points]

WARFARE = Amber Rank

POWERS

"No," Luke said. "But in the meantime, we've worked out a deal with each other—and Rinaldo's been in touch with the Pattern here. It will release him and continue his maintenance as soon as Corwin returns."

"Regarding that..." Jurt said.

"Yes?" Rinaldo asked.

"I'll stay here and cover for Rinaldo while you go find the pregnant lady with the glass eye."

"Why?" Rinaldo asked.

"Because you'll do a better job together and I'll feel a lot safer here than I would most other places."

"I'd have to see whether that's acceptable," Rinaldo said.

...

Rinaldo moved away from the Pattern, returned to us.

"You're hired," he said to Jurt...

Prince of Chaos

Imprint of Corwin's Pattern [50 Points] - Confers the full range of Pattern-based power, but founded on Corwin's Pattern instead of the Pattern of Amber. Jurt will certainly be able to manipulate those Shadows cast by Corwin's Pattern, but may have more difficulty in the Amber realm, especially close to Amber itself.

Broadcast Trump [40 Points] - Not Trump Artistry, but a substitute, gained in the Fount of Power, that gives Jurt the ability to Trump travel without cards.

Logrus Mastery [45 Points]

Shape Shifting [35 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

JURT—SON OF CORWIN, AND HIS LOGRUS-GHOST

"The real Jurt was never anywhere near the Pattern of Amber—"

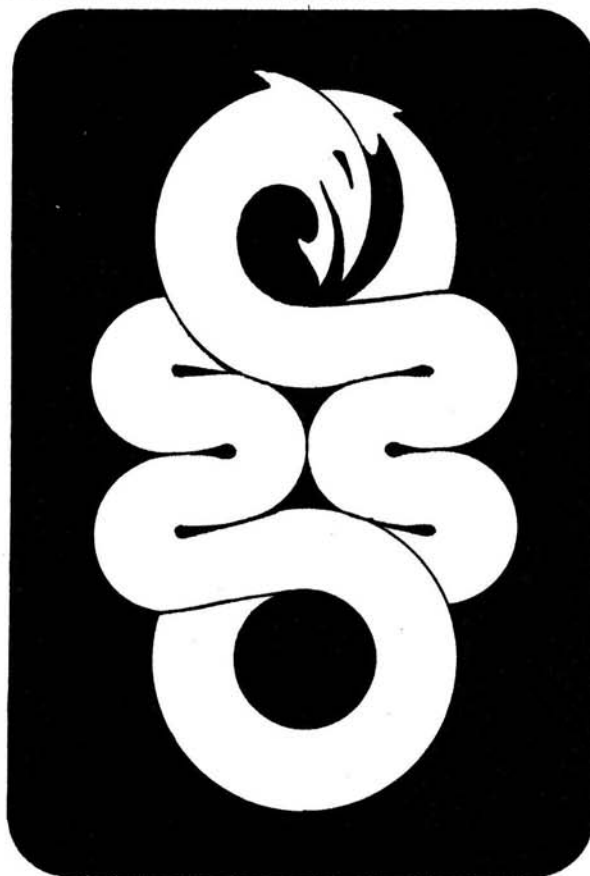
"I am the real Jurt!"

Merlin & Jurt's Ghost, in Knight of Shadows

Imagine that Jurt's Logrus Ghost escaped. Instead of being consumed by the crack in the Broken Pattern, he was simply transported elsewhere. Fortified by the infusion of Merlin's blood, Jurt's Ghost took to secretly following after the real Jurt, and eventually ended up at Corwin's Pattern.

Once there, he took up the same deal as Luke's Pattern Ghost. He promised to support Corwin's Pattern in exchange for the stability of the Pattern's energy.

Or, since Corwin's Pattern ended up adopting Jurt, and thereby gaining another template with which to make Pattern-Ghosts, perhaps the Jurt-Ghost was actually the agent of Corwin's Pattern. As far as the timing problem is concerned, the little matter of Jurt meeting Corwin's Pattern after Merlin's encounter with the Jurt-Ghost, it could be that Jurt had an earlier meeting with Corwin's Pattern, or that Corwin's Pattern managed to pull off one of Oberon's little tricks with time.



JURT—FOUNT-CHARGED POWERHOUSE

(200 POINT VERSION)

"...When did you start thinking this way? Might it coincide with your treatment in the Fountain? What if my interruption made yours closer to the correct course?"

"It's possible there's something to that," he said. "I'm glad now I didn't go the full route. I suspect it might have driven me mad, as it did Brand. But it may not have been that at all. Or—I don't know."

Prince of Chaos

When he is charged by the Fount of Power, Jurt's power is enormous. It's just that when he's fully charged by the Fount, as Luke put it, "...I think it takes away something of your humanity. You don't much give a shit about other people or human values afterward."

The charging is also temporary. If Jurt takes it easy, conserves his power, and doesn't get into any fights, it might last a week or two. Given the way it makes you feel like an unbeatable god, it's hard to sit around like that. When Jurt starts zapping around the universe, and throwing his weight around, he might burn through a charge in just a few hours.

Jurt knows all this. He understands that he'll lose control of himself, and he understands that he must be cautious. He also understands that someone else controls the Fount of Power, and that he might be turned into another guardian like Sharu Garrul if he isn't very careful.

He'll return to the Fount, and bathe himself, when necessary. Only when necessary.

Current Objectives.

Jurt wants the Fount of Power, and the Keep of Four Worlds. Not just because he wants to be able to charge himself at the Fount, though that's a nice bonus. Mainly, Jurt doesn't want anyone *else* to gain that power.

ATTRIBUTES•NORMAL

PSYCHE = Amber Rank

STRENGTH = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

ENDURANCE = Amber Rank

WARFARE = [15 Points]

ATTRIBUTES•FOUNT-CHARGED

PSYCHE = [100 Points]

STRENGTH = [50 Points]

ENDURANCE = [25 Points]

WARFARE = [15 Points]

POWERS

Living Trump [100 Points] - Like Brand before him, Jurt's bath in the Fount of the Four Worlds has increased his magical abilities tenfold. While Fount-Charged he can read the subjects of the Trumps, contact people without the Trumps themselves, reach through Shadow and pull things through to him, teleport through Shadow at will, locate and observe anyone in Shadow, and can even look into their thoughts.

Jurt's Attributes of Psyche, Strength, and Endurance are all likewise boosted while he's Fount-Charged.

Even when Jurt is "normal" he can continue to act as if he were a "Living Trump," transporting himself to any location that he can visualize.

Logrus Mastery [45 Points]

Shape Shifting [35 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

BAD STUFF•FOUNT-CHARGED

[+15 Points] - Applies *only* when Fount-Charged.

JURT—FOUNT-CHARGED POWERHOUSE, AND HIS LOGRUS-GHOST.

Then I heard a scream, and a blazing form passed on my left side.

"No!" I cried, reaching for it.

But I was too late. Jurt had stepped off the line, springing past me, driving his blade into my double even as his own body swirled and blazed. Fire also poured from my double's wound. He tried unsuccessfully to rise and fell back.

"Don't say that I never served you, brother," Jurt stated, before he was transformed into a whirlwind, which rose to the chamber's roof, where it dissipated.

Knight of Shadows

Jurt-Ghost was created by Jurt in the first place, as his agent in the trial between the Pattern and the Logrus.

Things went awry early on.

Not only did Merlin give the Jurt-Ghost a drink of Chaos-charged blood, but the Ghost became independent.

The original Jurt, using his link, was able to follow some of the action that followed, and overheard some of the conversation between his duplicate and Merlin.

What Jurt doesn't know, and what he'd very much like to learn, is what happened after his Ghost disappeared...

GAME MASTER TIPS FOR ROLE-PLAYING JURT

Jurt made a little humming noise, as he sometimes had when pondering things as a kid. Then, "We've got to get her before they do, and move her to someplace safe," he said.

Prince of Chaos

Jurt is an interesting personality in conflict: rebellious, spoiled, angry and short-tempered, he's also seen the consequences of his behavior and is working on changing himself into a person who will survive his impulses. Through his peace with Merlin and his relationship with Julia, Jurt is trying to mellow his anger and let go of the hurt and envy which fueled him for so long.

On the other hand, Jurt's anger towards Merlin isn't necessarily unreasonable. Consider that Merlin can be short-sighted, vindictive, and chummy with his buddies while excluding others. All are classic elder-brother-as-creep irritations.

Plus, of course, there's Merlin's womanizing ways. If Jurt sees himself as a protector of women, starting with his mother, and then various relatives and girlfriends, he's likely to see Merlin as a really nasty guy. After all, Merlin seems to have been quite a ladies man, both in the Courts of Chaos, and on Shadow Earth. And Julia's tale of woe would only confirm Jurt's worst suspicions.

JURT AS PLAYER IN THE GAMES OF THE COURTS OF CHAOS

"Jurt," he said, "met the changing times with a mixture of delight and fear. He was constantly talking of the latest deaths and of the elegance and apparent ease with which some of them were accomplished. Hushed tones interspersed with a few giggles. His fear and his desire to increase his own capacity for mischief finally reached a point where they became greater than his other fear—"

Mandor, in Sign of Chaos

As brother to the King of Chaos, Jurt is in an interesting position. He once desired the crown for himself, but claims that he no longer wants it, and must now either support Merlin or protect his brother from those who view Merlin's ascension with distaste. This also places Jurt in danger himself. If an ambitious Chaosian below him in the succession wants the throne, then Jurt must be eliminated. Because of this position, Jurt is trying to master the awesome powers he gained in the Fount and to overcome some of his natural clumsiness and almost supernatural bad luck.

Constant Allies & Enemies:

His closest ally is his lover Julia. They are partners and, unless she betrays him (and her returning to Merlin would be the most brutal of betrayals), he will remain loyal and protective. That Jurt has turned his greatest enemy, his brother Merlin, into something of an ally, testifies to Jurt's progress.

LUKE

...Lucas Reynard: six feet tall, red-haired, handsome in spite, or perhaps because, of an artistically broken nose, with the voice and manner of the salesman he was.

Trumps of Doom

The big, lovable lug.

Luke has come up with the perfect counter-measure to his biggest problem.

The problem, of course, is that he's the son of Prince Brand of Amber. A man hated and feared and thought to

be more than a little insane. Walk up to most Amberites, stick out your hand, and say, "Hi, I'm Brand's son," and, well, it's not the best way to get a warm reception.

Not that Luke is ashamed of his father. On the contrary, he'll defend his dad, all the way to the point of trying to assassinate his father's killers. Flashing the symbol of the Phoenix, he's proud of his old man.

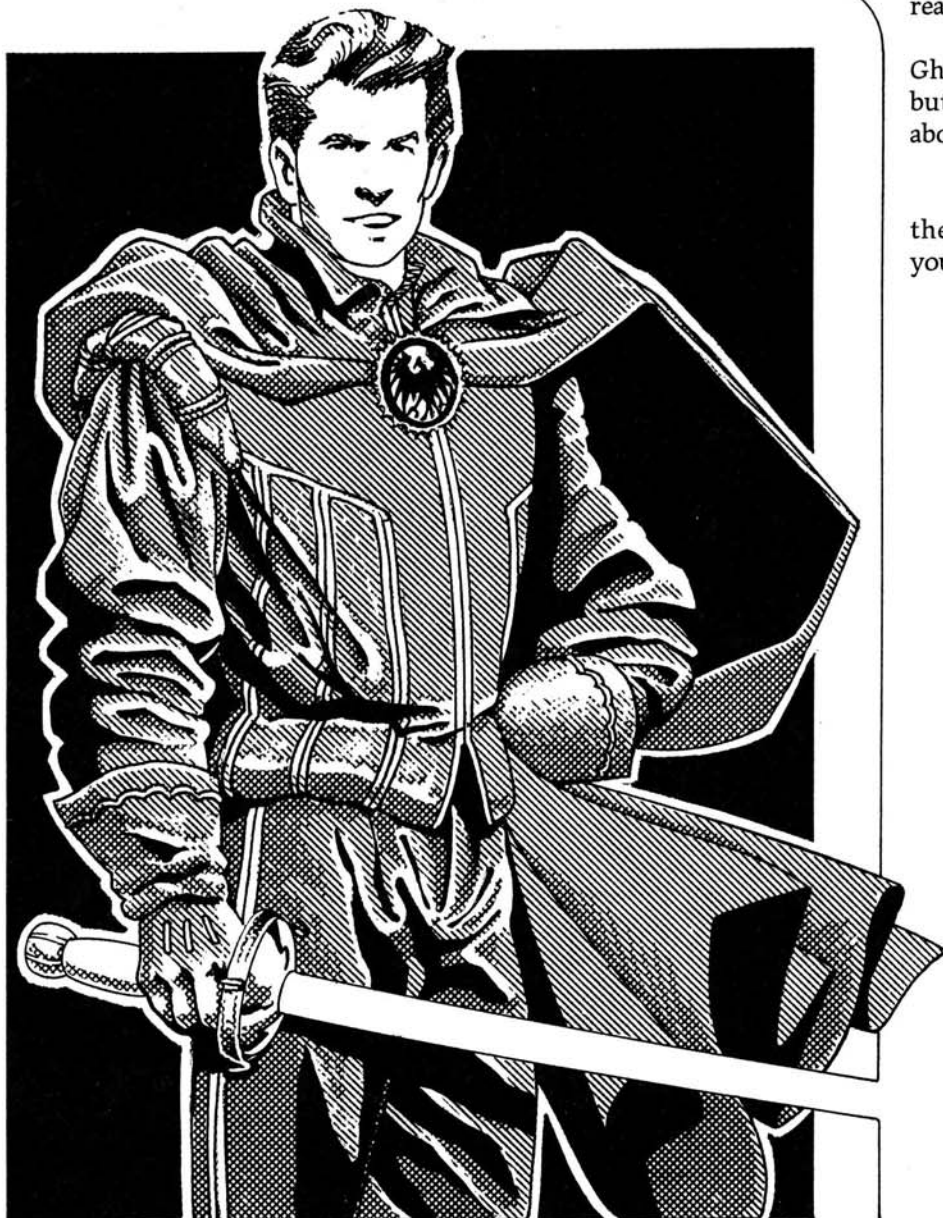
So Luke learned to turn on the charm.

While Merlin spent eight years on Shadow Earth learning about high-tech computers, Luke spent his time learning psychology, salesmanship, and the cutting edge techniques of manipulating human reactions.

Sure, Merlin came out of it with Ghostwheel, his personal Trump-god, but Luke came out being able to sell just about anything to just about anybody.

His biggest product?

As any good salesperson can tell you, the first thing you have to sell is yourself.



LUKE'S GHOST, RINALDO

"Luke!" I exclaimed, as he stepped inside, my manikins collapsing as my attention left them, into little gray, sticklike heaps. "What are you doing here?"

"Could say I was selling cemetery lots," he observed. "You interested in one?"

He had on a red shirt and brown khakis tucked into his brown suede boots. A tan cloak hung about his shoulders. He was grinning.

Prince of Chaos

Luke, whom I decided to continue calling Luke when his ghost was around, brightened suddenly. I resolved to think of his double as Rinaldo, to keep things sorted.

Prince of Chaos

Let's do the same.

Rinaldo, after drinking a couple of cups of Merlin's blood, being "adopted" by Corwin's Pattern, and spending a few hours being brought up to date by Luke, seems to be here to stay.

In fact, Luke and Rinaldo get along so great, it's as if Luke were just waiting for someone who would really appreciate his unique sense of humor.

These days, the only way you can tell them apart (unless you happen to have an ability to see their insides), is by their clothing. Rinaldo favors red and brown, while Luke goes for green and gold. Which also makes it easy to pull the old twin trick of standing in for each other by switching clothing. That's especially handy now that Luke is King of Kashfa.

For each version of Luke, there's a corresponding version of Rinaldo.

LUKE—SALESMAN TO THE COURTS (150 POINT VERSION)

"Damn you, Luke. You always make the stupidest things sound sort of attractive."

Merlin, Sign of Chaos

"The deadliest salesman in the Southwest," is what Merlin calls Luke.

Certainly Luke has managed to sell Merlin. No matter how much evidence Merlin collected against Luke, from bullets, to murder confessions, to kidnapping, he was still willing to go along with Luke's latest excuse.

Given the choice, especially now that he realizes that actual battle with either Lords of Chaos or elder Amberites can be hazardous to his health, Luke will try to talk himself out of situations. He'll prefer getting what he wants by negotiation rather than force.

Current Objectives.

Luke smiled.

"I know a good sales pitch when I hear it," he said. "Narrow it down to a simple choice. Make them think it's their own."

Prince of Chaos

Mostly, Luke wants out of his kingship. Other than that, he's looking to start enjoying life. He also wouldn't mind spending some time in both Courts, getting to know relatives on each side of reality.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Amber Rank

STRENGTH = [3 Points]

ENDURANCE = Amber Rank

WARFARE = [15 Points]

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

Trump Artistry [40 Points]

Power Words [10 Points] - Logrus Negation, Pattern Negation, Trump Disrupt, and Trump Filter. This last one allows Luke to answer a Trump call without revealing anything about his whereabouts. The caller is in touch with Luke's mind, but won't be able to see, hear or otherwise sense Luke's location.

Sorcery [15 Points]

ARTIFACTS & CREATURES

Junkyard Forest. Nice sketch, that. Though it didn't matter what it depicted, which is why I'd had Merlin fan the cards face down and had drawn one at random. That was for show, to confuse the Pattern. All of them led to places within spitting distance of the Crystal Cave—which had been the real reason for their existence in the first place...

Luke, in "The Salesman's Tale"

Trumps of Doom [12 Points] - Each card depicts a different scene out in Shadow. The trick is, when the Trump is activated, it changes the destination Shadow, warping its location, and dragging it adjacent to the Blue Crystal Cave. In other words, travel to the place of

the Sphinx by Shifting Shadow, or with a Trump sketch of the Sphinx, and you'll just be at a place in Shadow. Go to the same Sphinx using one of the Trumps of Doom, and you'll end up right next to the Shadow of the Blue Crystal Cave.

Although the Trumps of Doom were originally designed as an elaborate trap for Merlin, Luke can also use them to manipulate other places, and other aspects of Shadow.

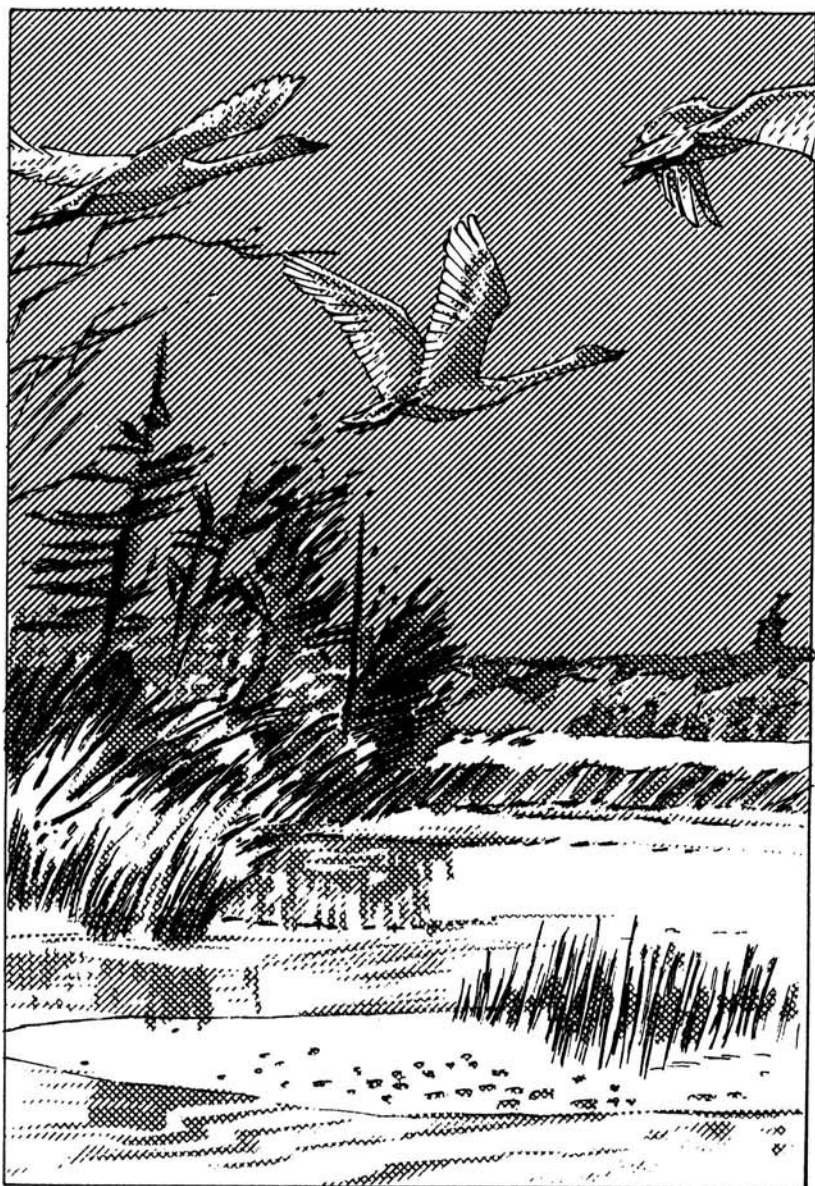
The known cards include (1) the grassy shore of a lake, (2) a Sphinx on a blue, rocky ledge, (3) a building of bones on top of a green glass mountain, and (4) a place that looks like a forest, but where everything is made out of rusty metal and broken glass.

- **Named & Numbered [*2 Points]** - Not the cards: there are already multiple cards in a Trump deck. This means there are several copies of the whole deck.

- **Shadow Manipulation, Mold Reality [4 Points]** - Each card, representing a different Shadow, distorts the Shadow so it merges with the Shadow containing the Blue Crystal Cave.

- **Trump Deck [2 Points]**

GOOD STUFF
[5 Points]



RINALDO—CORWIN'S PATTERN PROTECTOR (ZERO POINT VERSION)

"I feel—stronger," Luke announced, later. "Yes, I'll help guard this place. It seems a good way to spend some time."

"There won't be any problems yet," Corwin said. "Neither Power knows exactly how to approach it or what to do with it. It's too strong for Amber's Pattern to absorb, and the Logrus doesn't know how to destroy it."

"Sounds pretty easy, then."

"There will probably come a time later, though, when they will try to move against it."

"Until then, we wait and watch. Okay. If some things do come, what might they be?"

"Probably ghosts—like ourselves—seeking to learn more about it, to test. You any good with that blade?"

"In all modesty, yes. If that's not good enough, I've studied the Arts, as well."

"They'll fall to steel, though it's fire they'll bleed—not blood. You can have the Pattern transport you outside now, if you wish. I'll join you in a few moments to show you where the weapons are cached, and the other supplies. I'd like to take a little trip and leave you in charge for a while."

Prince of Chaos

Rinaldo is several years younger than Luke, since he was copied back during Luke's days as Merlin's fellow college student at Berkeley.

Since Luke was a pretty carefree and fun loving student, Rinaldo is pretty relieved that all the serious stuff about revenge for Brand's death, and all Jasra's plotting, are now over. It's as if he were facing this really intense job, that he knew would be taking years out of his life, and suddenly he doesn't have to do it.

Which makes Rinaldo a happy guy. Almost happy enough not to worry about being a Pattern-Ghost.

Still, he's got a new gig—defending Corwin's Pattern. The Pattern gives him a permanent lease on life, and all he's got to do is defend it. Heck, Rinaldo wouldn't say it out loud, but he'd probably defend Corwin's Pattern anyway.

Rinaldo is also pretty happy about knowing Luke. From Rinaldo's point of view, Luke isn't a twin, he's more like an older brother. An older brother who actually understands him.

ATTRIBUTES•Normal

PSYCHE = Human Rank [+25 Points]

STRENGTH = Human Rank [+25 Points]

ENDURANCE = Human Rank [+25 Points]

WARFARE = [15 Points]

ATTRIBUTES•Pattern-Charged

PSYCHE = Amber Rank

STRENGTH = Amber Rank

ENDURANCE = Amber Rank

WARFARE = [15 Points]

POWERS

Corwin's Pattern Imprint [0 Points] - This is really a gift. Corwin's Pattern not only maintains Rinaldo's life, but also gives him all the abilities of Pattern Imprint. In addition, when Rinaldo is infused with the energy from Corwin's Pattern, his Psyche, Strength and Endurance are all boosted. This only lasts for a few hours if he's travelling, but indefinitely when he's in sight of Corwin's Pattern.

Trump Artistry [40 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

GOOD STUFF

[5 Points]



LUKE—KING OF KASHFA

(200 POINT VERSION)

"Luke Reynard, otherwise known as Rinaldo," I answered, as the card was suddenly animated and I felt his scrutiny, "King of Kashfa and B.S. in Business Management, University of California at Berkeley..."

Luke, in "The Salesman's Tale"

Even though he'd rather be out wandering in Shadow, having a good time, Luke will make a good king.

He's certainly got the politics down pat.

Still, he's got to deal with the Queen problem.

On the books, he's married to Coral, and she was officially made Queen of Kashfa on his coronation day. Which works out great, since she's a highly placed royal from Begma, and their union might lead to the resolution of the Eregnor situation.

In fact, a child of King Rinaldo and Queen Coral could be joint ruler over an entire unified kingdom.

Except that Coral is carrying Merlin's child.

Plus, there's the added complication of Luke carrying on with Coral's sister Nayda. Who is really a demon Ty'iga...

It may take Luke a couple of decades just to get everything sorted out.

Current Objectives.

"...if you feel about the place the way I feel about Kashfa, you're not going to let it go to hell if you can help it—even if it means some personal misery..."

Prince of Chaos

He intends for Kashfa to prosper.

Luke, as a salesman born, understands that trade means more prosperity than war, so he'll start by settling all the various political feuds. He'll want a treaty with Begma and a resolution over the Eregnor problem. That will also mean the involvement of the Court of Amber.

The paperwork out of the way, Luke's next step will be to turn Kashfa into a major trading port. Considering his powers (which he can use to create new sea lanes through Shadow, for example), and his college business background, it's a good time to buy stock in Kashfa.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Amber Rank

STRENGTH = Amber Rank

ENDURANCE = Amber Rank

WARFARE = [50 Points]

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

Trump Artistry [40 Points] - Includes a few simple tricks Luke learned from Brand. For example, the ability to black-out the Trump, so only your mind shows through a contact, is just a matter of closing your eyes, ignoring everything else around you, and pretending to be in the dark.

Sorcery [15 Points] - In addition to the usual range of spells, Luke has learned a special lynchpin for casting a spell inside the Blue Crystal Cave. He can also cast spells against the Blue Stones, and the attunement they create in anyone who carries them.

ARTIFACTS & CREATURES OF POWER

"...What is the significance of the blue stones?"

"They have an affinity for the cave, and for each other," she told me. "A person with very little training could hold one of them and simply begin walking, following the slight psychic tugging. It would eventually lead him to the cave."

"Through Shadow, you mean?"

"Yes."

"Intriguing, but I fail to see any great value to it."

"But that is not all. Ignore the pull of the cave, and you will become aware of secondary tuggings. Learn to distinguish the signature of the proper stone, and you can follow its bearer anywhere."

"That does sound a little more useful. Do you think that's how those guys found me last night, because I had a pocket full of the things?"

"Probably, from a practical standpoint, they helped. Actually, though, in your case, they should not even have been necessary at this point."

"Why not?"

"They have an additional effect. Anyone who has one in his possession for a time becomes attuned to the thing. Throw it away and the attunement remains. You can still be tracked then, just as if you had retained the stone. You would possess a signature of your own."

"You mean that even now, without them, I'm marked?"

"Yes."

"How long does it take to wear off?"

"I am not certain that it ever does."

"There must be some means of deattunement."

"I do not know for certain, but I can think of a couple of things that would probably do it."

"Name them."

"Walking the Pattern of Amber or negotiating the Logrus of Chaos..."

*The Ty'iga (as Vinta Bayle), & Merlin,
in Blood of Amber*

Blue Stones [27 Points] - Luke set these up as an economical way to move people around in Shadow. He figured if each of his people had a chip of the Blue Stone, he could always track them down, or they could find their way on their own.

- Horde Quantity [*3 Points]
- Psychic Neutral [2 Points]
- Shadow Manipulation, Reality [4 Points]
- Psychic Signature [1 Point]
- Follow Shadow Path [2 Point]

Trumps of Doom [4 Points] - Luke's Trump are part of his personal deck. He created an even dozen copies so he could share them with the officers of his personal army (the mercenary force equipped with Amber-capable weapons).

- Named & Numbered Copies [*2 Points]
- Trump Deck [2 Points]

PERSONAL SHADOWS & WAYS

"It should be obvious that I'm making you a prisoner," he said. "The blue crystal, by the way, will block any Trump sendings and negate your magical abilities that rely on things beyond the walls. I need you alive and fangless for now, in a place where I can get to you in a hurry."

Trumps of Doom

Blue Crystal Shadow [4 Points] - Luke's control over the Shadow, in addition to the special properties of the Blue Stones, allows for the blockage of the Logrus, Pattern, Trump, and other outside powers. Magic will work, but only a secret variety of magic specifically designed for the Blue Stone environment.

- Personal Shadow [1 Point]
- Control of Contents [1 Points]
- Advanced Communication Barrier [2 Points]

Shadow Kashfa [4 Points] - Gives Luke control over the access to Kashfa. He can open or close the roads and seaways that connect Kashfa to other Shadows.

- Shadow of the Amber Realm [2 Points]
- Access Barrier [2 Point]

Luke's Vacation Shadow [5 Points] - Merlin saw the card of this place, but he mistook it for a Trump of Luke's old apartment. Understandable, since this is

exactly where Luke moved all his old furniture and paintings. It's actually the place where Merlin saw Luke recuperating, in sight of the lady in the blue bikini. It's set up as a "fast-time" place, where Luke can spend a few leisurely weeks, while only a couple of days pass in Amber.

- Personal Shadow [1 Point]
- Control of Time flow [2 Points]
- Access Barrier [2 Points]

GOOD STUFF

[1 Point]

**RINALDO—KASHFA KING'S DOUBLE
(200 POINT VERSION)**

"It's no mean stunt, finding your way this near to the Courts. Especially if you've never been here before. How'd you manage it?"

"Well, the Courts and I go back a long ways, old buddy. You might say it's in my—blood."

*Merlin & Luke's Ghost,
in Prince of Chaos*

Now that Rinaldo and Luke have reached an understanding, they're both working to make the situation permanent.

Which means that Rinaldo is on a steady diet of Luke's blood.

Eventually, they calculate, Rinaldo will no longer be a Pattern-Ghost, but will become Luke's true twin.

This works out great for Luke, since it makes the kingship much more tolerable if he can share it. Splitting it fifty-fifty with Rinaldo means each of them can get away for extended vacations. All they have to do is make sure that nobody ever finds out about the switching.

They've even figured out what to do if they ever do have a serious falling out. Since Rinaldo walked Corwin's Pattern, he'll just leave the Amber universe, and enter into the one created by Corwin's Pattern.

ATTRIBUTES & POWERS

Rinaldo has the potential for exactly the same Attributes and Powers as Luke. Anything he lacks, simply because he hasn't caught up with Luke's greater experience, he'll have on reserve as Good Stuff until he figures it out.

LUKE—CONSTRUCT ARTISAN

(250 POINT VERSION)

He was dressed in green, and blades must not have bothered him the way they do me, for a good-sized one hung at his right side. He seemed to be using a rolled cloak for a backpack, and he wore its clasp like a decoration upon his left breast—an elaborate thing, a golden bird of some sort.

Trumps of Doom

He is his father's son.

Ever since learning that Brand designed and built the Fount of Power as his own personal Construct, Luke has

been interested in the subject. And interested in real power.

Up until now, Luke has been experimenting with different aspects of power.

He gained the power to kill, by recruiting soldiers, and developing weapons.

Pattern and Trump, two of the most potent of powers, he mastered and manipulated.

Luke even tried bathing in the Fount of Power. It gave him power, but no great satisfaction. He walked the Pattern and wiped the remnants of that experiment from his body.

Lately, as King of Kashfa, Luke has played around with political power.

None of these approaches to power satisfy Luke.

After all, he might say to himself, the only real power is in the act of creation. Of building something new.

So he's been playing around with Constructs. He built a couple of his own, including the Crystal Cave. Luke also spent a lot of time trying to get through to Ghostwheel.

Now it's time for him to do some real experimenting...

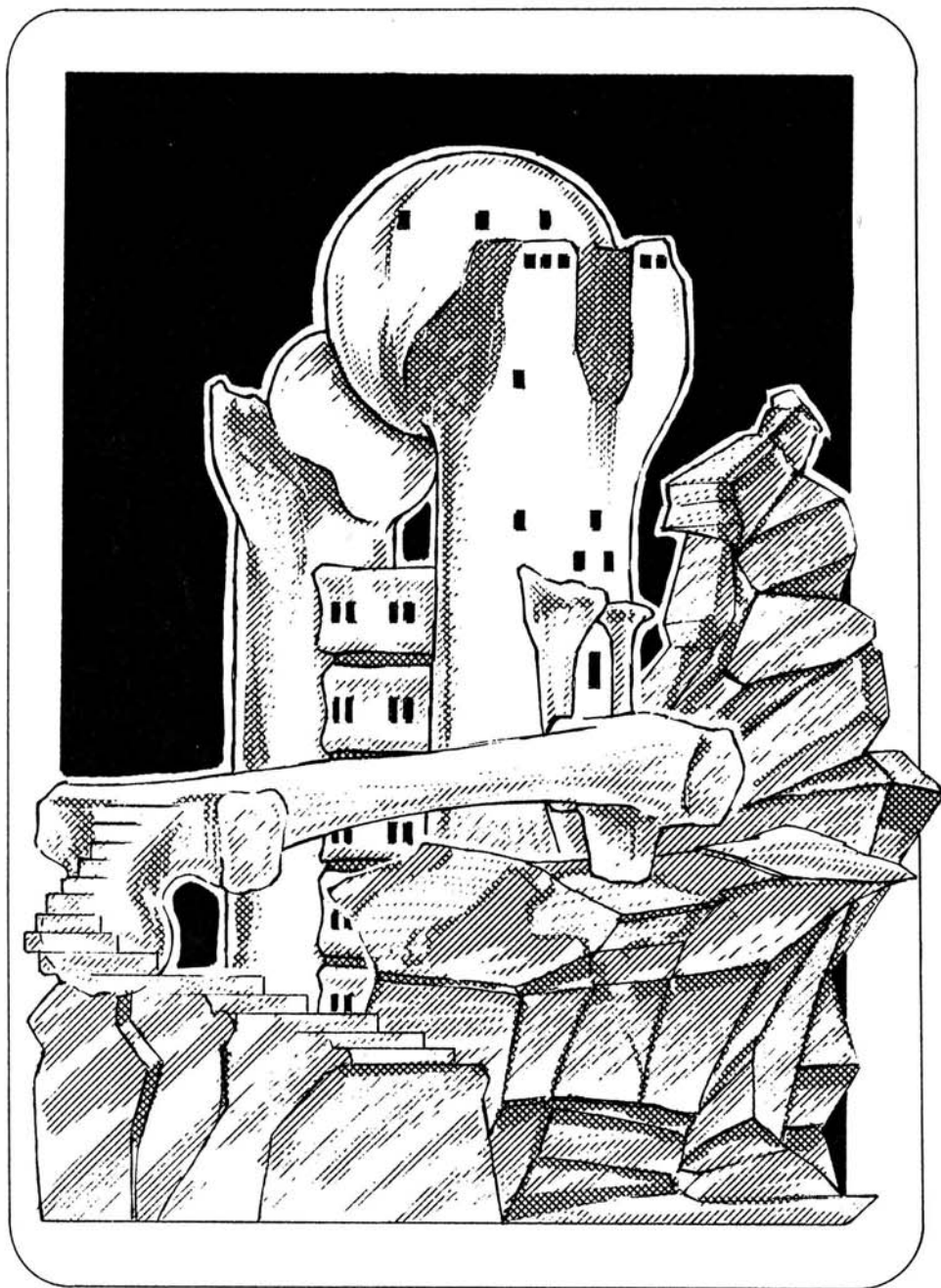
Current Objectives.

"Money buys things," Luke said. "Power makes things happen. If you ever have a choice, take the power."

Blood of Amber

Luke already recognizes that every source of power is a Construct of some kind or other. He is keen to find out more, much more, about the Constructs called Ghostwheel and the Spikards. Beyond that, Luke strongly suspects that both the Logrus and the Pattern are themselves Constructs.

From Luke's point of view, all these Constructs must have some kind of controls built into them by their creators. Find the right solution to their instruction set, and that will be the way to real power.



ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Amber Rank
 STRENGTH = Amber Rank
 ENDURANCE = Amber Rank
 WARFARE = [9 Points]

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]
 Advanced Trump Artistry [60 Points] - Both the Trumps of Doom, and Luke's Trump Blackout trick, require advanced proficiency with Trump.
 Shape Shifting [35 Points]
 Sorcery [15 Points]
 Conjunction [20 Points]

CONSTRUCTS

Blue Crystal Construct [8 Points] - All the true powers of the Blue Stones, such as being able to guide someone through Shadow, or to attune anyone who keeps a stone for a long enough time, come from the cave itself. The Blue Stones, no matter what their form, are just manifestations, or channels, for the Power based in Shadow.

- **Blue Crystal Shadow [2 Points]**
 - Personal Shadow [1 Point]
 - Control of Contents [1 Point]
- **Blue Stone Manifestation [6 Points]**
 - Innate Connection [*1 Point]
 - Horde Quantity [*3 Points]
 - Psychic Neutral [2 Points]
- **Construct Psyche—None [0 Points]**

The Tree of Life Construct [3 Points] - Luke's first experiment in creating a Construct. He wasn't satisfied with the results, but it was never really taken to its full potential.

- **Shadow Cost [2 Points]**
 - Personal Shadow [1 Point]
 - Named & Numbered [*2 Points] - Each of the ten sephirah represent a Shadow, all linked through the Construct.
- **Trump Painting Manifestation Cost [1 Point]**
 - Innate Connection [*1 Point]
 - Contains Trump Image [1 Point]
- **Construct Psyche-None [0 Points]**

ADVANCEMENT POINTS

[50 Points] - Luke has accomplished a lot, but now he is facing a lot of choices.

- **Gain some Power over Constructs. Cost: Varies**
- **Assay the Logrus Cost: 45 Points**
- **Increase his Attributes. Cost: Varies**
- **Get Advanced Pattern. Cost: 25 Points**

RINALDO—CONSTRUCT-GHOST (100 POINT VERSION)

As we climbed out, Corwin said to Luke, "Pattern ghosts tend not to last long."

"So I understand," Luke replied. "You know any tricks for someone in this position?"

"I know them all, sir. It take one to know, as they say."

*Corwin's Ghost & Luke's Ghost,
in Prince of Chaos*

Rinaldo is in trouble. Both he and Luke are well aware of the problem.

Pattern-Ghosts don't last long.

Yes, as long as Rinaldo stays near Corwin's Pattern, so long as Corwin's Pattern isn't seriously disrupted, he's safe. And he can always gain a little time by drinking the blood of an Amberite (Luke has already volunteered).

Still, it's just a matter of time before something bad happens.

So Rinaldo and Luke are working on a possible solution.

Their idea is to create a new Construct, one based on Rinaldo himself. In the same way that the Fount of Power is maintained by the interaction of the four elemental Shadows, so Rinaldo could become a Construct maintained by some kind of steady Shadow energies.

Now it's just a matter of figuring out the details.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Amber Rank
 STRENGTH = Amber Rank
 ENDURANCE = Amber Rank
 WARFARE = Amber Rank

POWERS

Corwin's Pattern Imprint [50 Points]
 Trump Artistry [40 Points]
 Sorcery [15 Points]

BAD STUFF

[+5 Points]

GAME MASTER TIPS FOR ROLE-PLAYING LUKE

"Wait a minute," I said. "What are you planning?"

"Nothing special," he answered. "Like I told the queen, I'm just going to play things by ear."

"I sometimes get the feeling you're as devious as you make her out to be," I said.

"I hope so," he replied. "But there's a difference. I'm honest."

"I don't know that I'd buy a used car from you, Luke."

"Every deal I make is special," he said, "and for you it's always top of the line."

Merlin & Luke, in Sign of Chaos

Here's an example.

In one play-test session, when one of the major powers was totally out of control (okay, it was the Logrus itself), enraged and about to commit large scale destruction, one of the player characters pulled Luke's Trump, looking for an escape.

Luke pulled himself right into the action.

He stepped out smiling, talking, and obviously delighted. "This is great!" he said, "I'm sure we can cut a deal to give you exactly what you want..."

Within minutes Luke was selling the Logrus on the advantages of using the skills of the player character, and selling the player character on the advantages of selling his skills to the Logrus.

Luke even pulled a blank contract out of his jacket (personally, I think he's got a paperwork creation spell), and started talking terms and clauses.

With, of course, a tidy little "commission" for himself.

LUKE AS FATHER

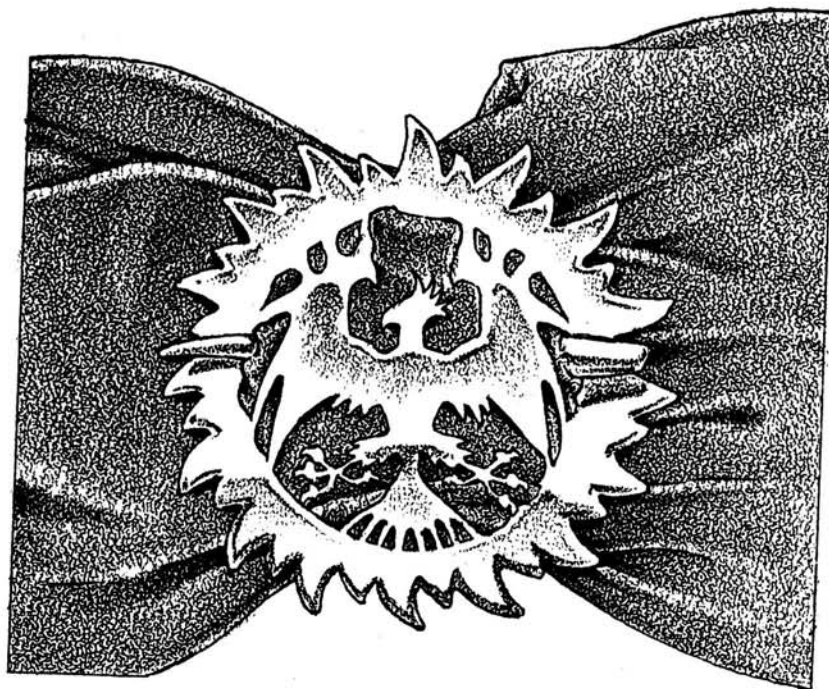
A couple of possibilities come to mind.

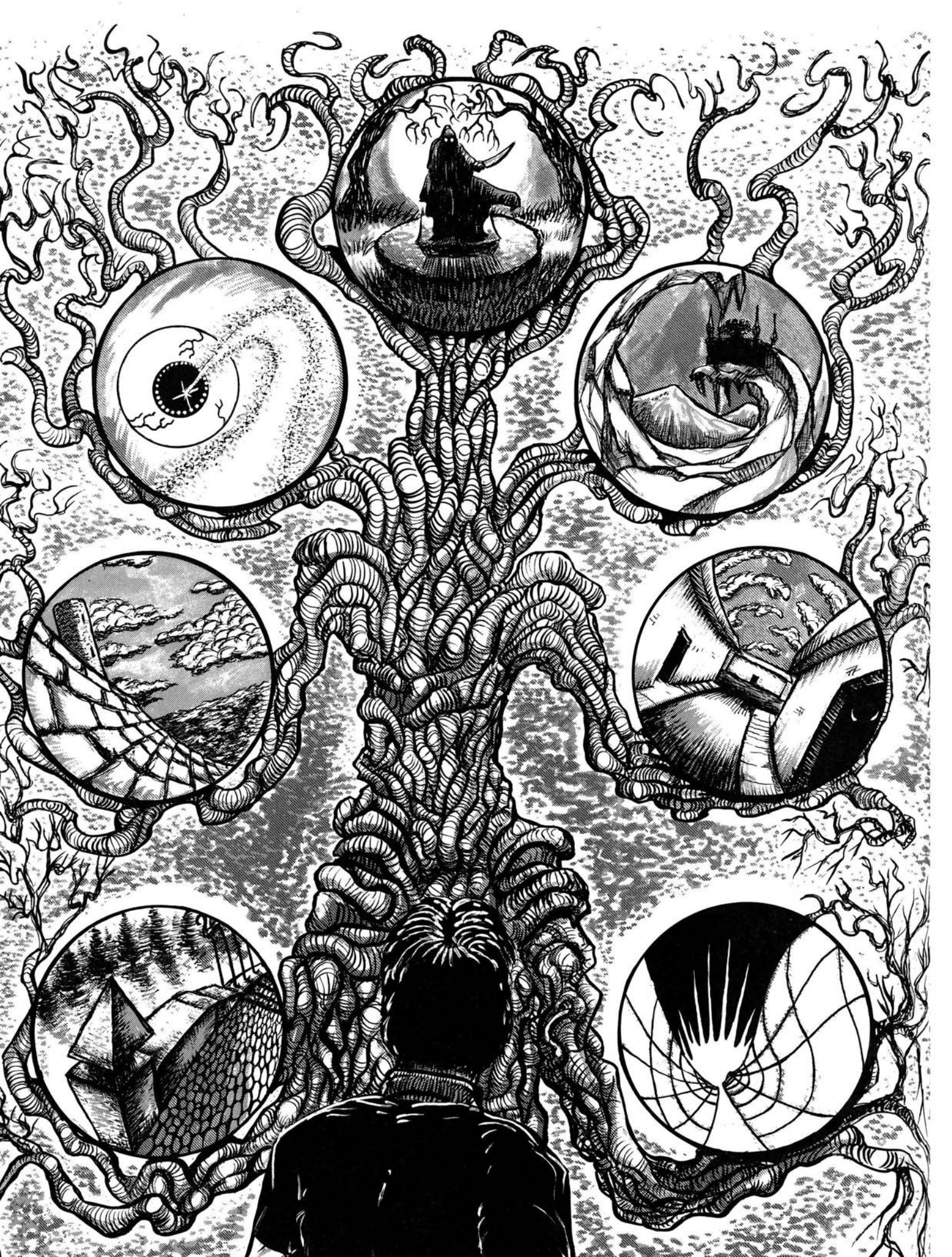
First, he apparently spent a fair amount of time bumming around in Kashfa, as well as riding around and raising a little hell with Dalt and the mercenaries. Which means he's have more than a chance or two of being presented with an unexpected surprise.

Likewise, he did spend a lot of time on Shadow Earth, and had more than a few girlfriends. Could be that one ended up pregnant, an especially intriguing possibility if the one in question is the infamous "Carol." A woman who makes dating a demon look reasonable, at least in the eyes of Luke's mother Jasra.

Constant Allies & Enemies:

Hmmm... do Construct-Ghosts count as allies? If so, Rinaldo might be Luke's closest ally. Still, when he needs a bit of muscle, Luke calls on Dalt. As far as enemies are concerned, Luke picked up a few by shooting Caine. In particular, Prince Julian is looking forward to settling the score.





Tree of Life Shadows

by Cathy Klessig & Erick Wujcik

In putting together the Tree of Life Trump Painting, Luke worked his will upon Shadow. Each Shadow is designed to teach his students something about magic and spell-casting.

Kethier, a barren place, surrounded by a featureless but brilliant white fog. Any magic designed to reduce things to a simpler form ought to work very well here.

Hochmah, a place of raw force, with a storm-swept sky overhead. It is easy to summon raw energy here, especially bolts of lightning.

Binah. This is the place where Victor Melman attempted to sacrifice Merlin. Once a gloomy forest clearing, which seemed to boost person-controlling spells. It may still be in the grip of Primal Chaos, or may just have been turned into a void.

Hesed appears as an island of purple grass, next to a blue river, under a violet sky. The moment anyone sets foot on the island, hordes of hungry blue river-dragons come boiling out of the water, showing lots of ominous blue-white teeth. But all magic for causing sleep or immobility is heightened here, so there's no danger, provided someone has the right kind of magic ready.

Gevurah was designed to test combat. The ground is flat red marble, and there is a forever-bloody sunset. Faceless warriors attack, first one, and then two, then four, and so forth. All are mindless and are Human Ranked in Strength, Endurance and Warfare. Combat spells work wonderfully.

Tiphareth is a throne room, built of rose quartz and yellow topaz, with a beautiful throne carved from a single rose-pink star ruby. Casting any tutelary or vision-inducing spells while seated on the throne will cause wonderful scenes to appear, both visible and audible.

Netzach is a green lawn, where hidden snakes with emerald eyes will attempt to bite the visitor. Their venom causes victims to feel irritation and anger, usually directed at anyone they encounter. Since it's difficult to keep calm once affected by the poison, this is a test of how well you can cast spells after losing your self-control.

Hod is a barren slope of purple rock, under an orange sky. Every few minutes visitors will be threatened by some form of natural phenomenon. A wave of molten lava will erupt and start flowing directly toward them. Or a whirling tornado of yellow rocks will advance from the horizon. Or an earthquake will shake the land, with huge cracks opening underfoot.

All these things are illusionary, and the idea is to ignore them, and to see the difference between magic and reality.

Yesod. Under a star-strewn indigo sky, the party appears in a pavilion, among a deep, soft layer of purple cushions. Food and drink is readily at hand, and there is a sensual smell to the place. Eventually, one by one, visitors will be joined by beautiful companions, either a succubus for the gentlemen, or incubus, for the ladies. Although one could take advantage of things, the whole point of this exercise is to resist the temptations that are offered.

Malkuth is a treasure trove. Within black marble rooms there are golden treasures, jewelry, coin and all manner of valuables, all of it seeming to be quite real. Anything taken from this Shadow will turn to dust. Unless, of course, one figures out the correct spell, which lends the items reality in another Shadow.

MANDOR

by Joe Saul & Erick Wujcik

...I held it before me and put the others away, studying the blue eyes and the young, hard, slightly sharp features beneath a mass of pure white hair. He was dressed all in black, save for a bit of white collar and sleeve showing beneath the glossy tight-fitting jacket. He held three dark steel balls in his right hand.

Sign of Chaos

Elegant and poised, Mandor is never at a loss for the proper word or action, with a charm that many women find irresistible.

Whether by design, or as a by-product of an elegant life-style, Mandor receives each Trump call as if it were staged. Every detail is as if selected for effect and good taste.

Indeed, Mandor always maintains a cool demeanor, even in the face of dire threats or painful physical injury. In fact, the only time Mandor exhibited a trace of nervousness seems to have been a matter of deliberate calculation.

Aside from being a consummate politician and diplomat, Mandor is also an accomplished sorcerer. He uses his ubiquitous steel balls to cast spells seemingly at will, without preparation. And, as an able manipulator of the Logrus (a pupil of Suhuy), he is skilled in everything from nearly-undetectable spells of persuasion to the unleashing of primal chaos.

Mandor is one of the trickiest schemers in either court. If he calls you enemy, you are not long for this world. And if he calls you friend, he probably has plans for you...



MANDOR— SAWALL'S KINGMAKER (225 POINT VERSION)

"Now, about the king business," he said. "What happens if you simply refuse to take the throne? Who's next in line?"

"It's a bit tangled when you come to Sawall," I said. "By rights, Mandor should be first in line of succession from our house. He'd removed himself from the line years ago, though."

"Why?"

"I believe he claimed he was unfit to rule."

"No offense, Merle. But he seems like the only one of you who is fit for the job."

"Oh, without a doubt," I responded. "Most of the Houses have someone like him, though. There's usually a nominal head and a *de facto* one, someone for show and someone for scheming. Mandor likes the climate behind the scenes."

Merlin & Luke, in *Prince of Chaos*

Would Mandor really have treated Merlin well all these years, become his best friend, plotted and schemed for centuries, and even hastened Swayvill's death, just so he could maneuver Merlin to the throne and rule through him?

You bet.

Mandor avoids wielding political power publicly, but he just loves doing it from behind the scenes. And he's very good at it. Within a short time after Swayvill's death, all of the rival claimants to the throne are dead. Including two who were supposedly under the black watch. Mandor may not have had a direct hand in all the assassinations, but he doesn't hesitate to lend his knife to the cause.

He also understands the importance of intelligence in the affairs of state. Mandor might very well serve as the Richelieu of the Courts, commanding legions of spies and operatives within and outside the borders of Chaos.

Current Objectives.

Merlin's accession to the throne was only part of the plan. Its completion will come about only if Merlin cooperates as ruler; Mandor is content to wait and observe. In the meantime, Mandor will have a keen interest in the strange tools wielded by Merlin. In other words, he'll want to know more—much more—about Ghostwheel, the Spikards, and Corwin's Pattern.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [40 Points]

STRENGTH = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

ENDURANCE = Amber Rank

WARFARE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

POWERS

Advanced Logrus Mastery [70 Points]

Trump Artistry [40 Points]

Shape Shift [35 Points]

The air was distorted between us, and when Mandor lowered his arms a dinner table covered with embroidered white linen came into sudden view between us, soundlessly, followed a moment later by a pair of facing chairs. The table bore numerous covered dishes, fine china, crystal, silverware; there was even a gleaming ice bucket with a dark twisted bottle within it.

"I am impressed," I stated.

"I've devoted considerable time to gourmet magic in recent years," he said. "Pray, be seated."

Sign of Chaos

Sorcery [15 Points] - Mandor is simply well prepared.

Like any serious cook, he is constantly experimenting with his recipes. The difference being that Mandor's recipes are actually spells, carefully worked out spells of Summoning.

Conjuration [20 Points]

CREATURES AND ARTIFACTS

She handed me the ball. I took it and weighed it in the palm of my right hand. I had no idea how the things functioned. The metal balls were to Mandor what Frakir was to me—a piece of idiosyncratic personal magic, forged out of his subconscious in the heart of the Logrus.

*Merlin, in *Knight of Shadows**

Mandor's Steel Balls [14 Points] - Combined with his Sorcerous skills, the steel balls store spells, casting them instantly. Spells racked in them automatically adapt to the environment and target, making it unnecessary for Mandor to specify these as lynchpins. A ball can be tossed at a target (such as that used to demolish the Fount of Power). Setting one or more balls in motion is useful for binding spells, shields, and so on. The balls communicate with each other; any spell racked in one is immediately duplicated in all of the others.

- **Named and Numbered [*2 Points]**
- **Double Speed [2 Points]**
- **Psychic Sensitivity [1 Point]**
- **Can Rack and Use Spells [4 Points]**

Mandor's Agents [12 Points] - a horde of loyal spies throughout the Courts, shadow, and Amber as well, who report all they see to Mandor by Trump and coded message. Many are sorcerers to some degree; all can perform Shape Shifting.

- **Horde [*3 Points]**
- **Limited Shape Shift [4 Points]**

BAD STUFF

[+1 Point] - Just enough to give Mandor a slightly stylish, slightly sinister air.

MANDOR— LORD OF DECEPTION (300 POINT VERSION)

"If one of your relatives strolls by, should I introduce myself as a Lord of Chaos?"

"I thought you were also a lord of deception."

"Of course," he said, and he clapped his hands and vanished.

*Mandor & Merlin, *Sign of Chaos**

Just how could a Lord of Chaos, and heir to one of the great Houses, be considered "unfit" for the kingship?

Perhaps because Mandor is truly degenerate. Because he's gone beyond the point where he could be trusted with the kingship.

Mandor is dabbling in the taboo. In the Courts of Chaos that means he has gone farther than he should in Shape Shifting his own body, and his own personality.

Current Objectives.

"One wonders at his deliveries," my mother said, "without apparent rehearsal."

"Grace," Sufuy commented. "He was born with an abundance."

"I wonder who will die today?" she said.

"I am not certain the implication is warranted," Sufuy replied.

She laughed.

"And if it is," she said, "they will certainly expire in good taste."

"Do you speak in condemnation or envy?" he asked.

"Neither," she said. "For I, too, am an admirer of grace—and a good jest."

*Dara & Sufuy, in *Prince of Chaos**

Who knows?

Mandor is too slippery to pin his hopes on anything so transitory as a single set of objectives. He's too much the opportunist, and too sensitive to opportunities in the passing scene.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [75 Points]

STRENGTH = [5 Points]

ENDURANCE = [30 Points]

WARFARE = Amber Rank

POWERS

Advanced Logrus Mastery [70 Points]

Forbidden Shape Shift [80 Points] - Mandor has gone beyond the normal boundaries of Shape Shifting, entering proscribed realms. He risks everything, from his own sanity to the lives of those around him, in these dangerous experiments in self-change.

As to Mandor's Steel Balls, they are actually shape-shifted pieces of Mandor's brain, wrought from his own flesh and imbued with his sorcerous powers. Having, in effect, several independent brains allows Mandor to cast complex spells quickly and efficiently, with each ball "speaking" a lynchpin—or a portion of a lynchpin—and all of them working together to cast the spell.

In practice, this "parallel processing" technique allows Mandor to cast complex spells, with multiple lynchpins, in the time it takes to speak a single lynchpin; spells with one lynchpin are cast almost instantaneously.

The bad part is that every ball is a piece of Mandor's brain, and thus Mandor can be psychically attacked through any of them. Though they may not be able to communicate with Mandor when they're not in the same shadow with him (after all, he didn't know that Coral had removed one from Nayda's body), they might still be usable as a link for a psychic assault. He generally doesn't let them stray far.

Sorcery [15 Points]

...I entered the dining room behind Mandor and watched him transform it with a few words and gestures. The trestle table and the benches were replaced by a round table and comfortable-looking chairs—the chairs so situated as to provide a good view of the mountains from each. Jasra had not yet arrived, and I was carrying the two wine bottles whose respiration Mandor found most appealing. Before I could even set them down, Mandor conjured an embroidered tablecloth and napkins; delicate china, which looked as if it had been hand decorated by Miró; finely wrought silverware. He studied the tableau a moment, banished the silverware, summoned a set with a different pattern. He hummed as he paced and regarded the layout from various angles. Just as I moved forward to place the bottles on the table, he summoned a crystal bowl filled with floating flowers as a centerpiece. I took a step backward then as crystal goblets appeared.

Knight of Shadows

Instant Conjunction [25 Points] - This is a further refinement of Conjunction, where those same abilities are speeded up to the point where it only takes the time for a simple word or gesture.

Mandor has specialized, and attained such expertise in the conjunction of food, that he can whistle up banquets in a matter of minutes, experimenting with place settings and accoutrements. The food is normal in all respects—no magical tampering—and is of excellent quality.

His secret? An unusual, cultivated, ability to manipulate shadow stuff via conjunction and transform it into food. And a bit of artistry and creativity. Enjoy the food; it's as real as anything, and excellent even by jaded Amberite standards.



MANDOR—HELLMASTER

(400 POINT VERSION)

"Why?" Mandor repeated.

"I must," she answered.

"Why must you?" he asked.

"I..." Her teeth raked her lower lip and the blood began to flow again.

"Why?"

Her face grew flushed and beads of perspiration appeared upon her brow. Her eyes were still unfocused, but they brimmed with tears. A thin line of blood trickled down her chin. Mandor extended a clenched fist and opened it, revealing another metal ball. He held this one about ten inches before her brow, then released it. It hung in the air.

"Let the doors of pain be opened," he said, and he flicked it lightly with a fingertip.

Immediately, the small sphere began to move. It passed about her head in a slow ellipse, coming close to her temples on each orbit. She began to wail.

"Silence!" he said. "Suffer in silence!"

The tears ran down her cheeks, the blood ran down her chin...

Sign of Chaos

Mandor is surpassingly cruel. He shows no compunction about causing pain, or manipulating and lying to others, if he is being balked in his aims. As Mandor said, "I've a few private hells I've designed and furnished—for purely aesthetic reasons..." Not something one does on an idle afternoon.

With Mandor's ruthlessness has come a willingness to enslave other beings, and other souls. The steel balls, for example, contain the essences of spirits or sorcerers, locked into the balls and forced to do Mandor's bidding.

And his "gourmet conjuration," on the surface the talent of a good host, has a deeper purpose.

Current Objectives.

Mandor has been frustrated in his aim of putting a slave on the throne of the Courts of Chaos. Until he sees who actually ascends, and how they behave, he will bide his time.

And, if things are not to his liking, he will move to bind a King to his will, or remove him.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [90 Points]

STRENGTH = Amber Rank

ENDURANCE = [22 Points]

WARFARE = Amber Rank

POWERS

Advanced Logrus Mastery [70 Points]

Trump Artistry [40 Points]

Advanced Shape Shift [65 Points]

Logrus Sorcery [20 Points] - Mandor can cast spells based on the power of the Logrus. Using an invocation of the Logrus as one lynchpin of the spell, he can hang and use spells which automatically adapt themselves to the shadow and target.

Someone with this ability casts spells that include a new Micro-Spell, Logrus Invocation, which powers the spell with Logrus energy and imbues it with the Logrus' ability to adapt itself.

Micro-Spell: Logrus Invocation.

Opens a link to the Logrus. Taken by itself, this spell simply brings the Logrus up in the caster's mind (it may, in some cases, be faster than bringing it up the normal way). This micro-spell is the basic building block used by Logrus sorcerers to cast self-adapting spells. Such spells are analogous to a computer program that rewrites itself to run on whatever operating system it is on.

When using a spell that includes a Logrus invocation, the caster does not need to specify Name/Description of Subject, Magic of Shadow, or Name of Current Shadow.

Base Casting Time: Thirty Minutes

Lynchpins: Additional five minutes casting time each. Trigger (Optional), Duration (Optional), Dispel Word (Optional).

She proceeded to eat several mouthfuls. I kept her company, then discovered I could not stop eating. I glanced at Mandor, but he remained inscrutable. He'll never admit to magically enhancing a flavor or laying a compulsion on diners to clean their plates. Either way, we did finish the course before she spoke again. And I could hardly complain, considering.

Knight of Shadows

Respondences and High Compellings [40 Points] -

What started out as mere Conjunction has taken on much more sinister connotations. Mandor is now lightning fast with his Conjuring.

Yes, the food is excellent, and the tableware pleasing to the eye. After all, Mandor himself must partake of his own offering, and he is a discriminating diner. Yet the taste is not the real object. Instead, each time Mandor sets serves a meal is another opportunity to

gauge the will, resistance and Psychic strength of each victim.

CREATURES AND ARTIFACTS

With a quick underhand toss he cast the metal ball across the ditch toward the burning building. It struck the ground and with each bounce thereafter it seemed to increase in size. It produced a cymballike crash each time it hit, entirely out of proportion with its apparent mass and velocity, and this sound increased in volume on each successive bounce. It passed then into the burning, tottering ruin that was the near end of the Keep and for several moments was gone from sight.

I was about to ask him what was going on when I saw the shadow of a large ball pass before the opening through which I had fled. The flames—save for the central tower from the broken Fount—began to subside, and a deep rumbling sound came from within. Moments later an even larger circular shadow passed, and I began to feel the rumbling through the soles of my boots.

A wall tumbled. Shortly thereafter part of another wall fell. I could see inside fairly clearly. Through the dust and smoke the image of the giant ball passed again. The flames were snuffed. My Logrus vision still granted me glimpses of the shifting lines of power which flowed between Jasra and Sharu.

Mandor extended a hand. A minute or so later a small metal ball came bouncing our way, and he caught it.

Knight of Shadows

Mandor's Basic Steel Balls [24 Points] - Each of the balls is designed to hold the essence of a Shadow Sorcerer, captured by Mandor using a particularly nasty spell in much the same way that he captures sound in precious stones. These sorcerers, held in thrall, cast spells at Mandor's bidding.

For example, Zachar was the sorcerer king of his own Shadow, Arkuz. When Mandor clicks the sixth ball, he can access all of Zachar's spells.

- Named and Numbered [*2 Points]
- Engine Speed [4 Points]
- Invulnerable [4 Points]
- Rack & Use Spells [4 Points]

Mandor's Invisible Servitors [3 Points] - Mandor has enslaved a number of invisible lesser demons from beyond the Rim, who act as his spies, cooks, and household staff.

- Psychic Neutral [2 Points]
- Alternate Form [1 Point] - Invisible

PERSONAL SHADOWS & WAYS

A quarter-mile of mountain trail later, I bore right to Mandorways, traveling a blue beach beneath a double sun for perhaps a hundred yards. Then I turned right, passing through a remembered archway of stone, moving briefly past a bubbling lava field and through a black obsidian wall, which took me to a pleasant cavern, over a small bridge, through a corner of a graveyard, a few steps along the Rim and into the receiving area of his Ways...

Prince of Chaos

Mandorways [8 Points] - Mandor's private home, and also where he receives guests. Aside from by-ways that lead to the rest of the Ways of Sawall, his servants can slip from Mandorways to many spy holes throughout the Courts of Chaos.

- Shadow of the Realm of Chaos [2 Points]
- Control of Destiny [4 Points]
- Access Barrier [2 Points]

Mandor's Shadow Hells [18 Points] - Mandor consigns his enemies to tailored Hells, each designed to provide an eternity of pain. For example, the souls contained in Mandor's Steel Balls know their bodies are still living, still held against the moment when Mandor chooses to release them. There is no death in these Hells. As Mandor would tell you, "those who die can no longer suffer."

- Named & Numbered Shadows [*2 Points]
- Personal Shadow [1 Points]
- Control of Destiny [4 Points]
- Barriers & Guards [4 Points]

GAME MASTER TIPS FOR ROLE-PLAYING MANDOR

"I hope you know what you're doing," I called to him.

"We'll know in about a minute," he replied, lowering his arms.

The Sign of the Logrus winked out before me.

We watched the damned thing spin for some time, bigger and noisier.

Finally, "What have you proved?" I asked him.

"That you have no patience," he answered.

Merlin & Mandor, in Prince of Chaos

If Mandor is talking to the players, it is for a purpose. Even an accidental encounter is likely to be manipulated to suit his ends. He may be quite helpful to player characters, offering advice on magic or politics, if he feels it

will gain him something—particularly if the gain is their trust. Or he may deliberately attempt to ruin alliances and sow dissension, if that fits his goals better.

MANDOR AS PLAYER IN THE GAMES OF THE COURTS OF CHAOS

"Do you not feel it somewhat odd that Swayvill expired just when he did, when so many things are coming to fruition simultaneously, after having hung on for so long?"

"He had to go sometime," I said, "and all the recent stresses probably proved too much."

"Timing," Mandor said. "Strategic placement. Timing."

"For what?"

"To place you on the throne of Chaos, of course," he replied.

Merlin & Mandor, in Prince of Chaos

More than a player, Mandor sees himself as Game Master in the Courts of Chaos. No move will take place without his oversight and his consent.

MANDOR AS FATHER

"If additional persuading is needed, there are only threats and bribes. I've a few private hells I've designed and furnished—for purely aesthetic reasons..."

Sign of Chaos (158)

Mandor is a perfectionist, demanding a high level of performance both from himself and those around him. It is hard to believe he would be any other way with his children. As seen in the example above, he can be quite sarcastic; he is often patronizing with Merlin, his younger step-brother. On the other hand, any child of Mandor is likely to be raised to social standards that even Flora could find no fault with, and with an excellent grasp of politics and magic.

Of course, any child of Mandor is also likely to be manipulated—willingly or no—to political ends, much like Merlin was.

OFFSPRING OF MANDOR AND FIONA.

"My! My!" he said. "Will you please introduce me, Merlin?"

"Who," Fiona asked, "is that?"

"This is my brother Mandor," I told her, "of the House of Sawall in the Courts of Chaos. Mandor, this is my Aunt Fiona, Princess of Amber."

Mandor bowed.

"I have heard of you, Princess," he said. "It is indeed a pleasure."

Sign of Chaos

An intriguing possibility would be to set up a player as the child of Mandor and Fiona. The two have certainly had ample contact and opportunity, and, apparently, a certain amount of mutual attraction. They may even have met long before the "introduction" described above.

For a child who is interested in power, this could be great—an opportunity to study under two of the top sorcerers in the universe. Less fortunate kids might also discover just how bad it is to be the child of two top political manipulators, each with their own plans for the child (this is also a pretty unique opportunity, if you want to look at it that way). On the other hand, being raised and dominated by two such strong personalities, not to mention being the subject of ceaseless maneuvering between the two, could make early life a living hell.

Constant Allies & Enemies

"...I happen to know he's a cultist himself."

"Really? How do you know this?"

"He made no secret of it in the old days, before the general proscription."

"And who might his personal patron be?" I said.

"The Princess Fiona," she replied.

Prince of Chaos

The son of Lord Sawall prior to Sawall's marriage to Dara, Mandor is Merlin's stepbrother. He is probably Merlin's best friend in the Courts. Though at times sarcastic and patronizing, he seems to genuinely like Merlin. An affection that doesn't stop him from plotting, in collusion with Merlin's mother Dara, to put Merlin on the throne of Chaos as a puppet.

MANDOR'S BOOK OF SPELLS

by Joe Saul & Erick Wujcik

Astral Club

This spell conjures a shimmering, translucent rod of force, that sails through the air from the caster's hand. Being insubstantial until contact, it is impossible to parry with conventional weapons. The main advantage of this spell is that it is fast, and that an ignorant target may attempt to parry rather than dodge.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Casting Time: Thirty Minutes

Lynchpins: Additional ten minutes casting time each. Magic of Shadow (Optional for Logrus Sorcery), Hand Motions, Trigger.

Chains of Deliverance

Brings into being a webwork of living, twisting, viciously-hooked chains, which envelop the target and draw him/her/it toward the caster, all the while draining the target's magical energy. Characters with Chaos strength or less will be unable to break the chains; those of Amber strength will have difficulty (obviously, this spell would be nigh-ineffective against Gérard).

Spell Type: Summoning

Casting Time: One and a Half Hours

Lynchpins: Additional ten minutes casting time each. Magic of Shadow (Optional for Logrus Sorcery), Target (Optional for Logrus Sorcery), Trigger.

Diamond Bubble

Another entrapment spell, this one surrounds the target with a bubble of the hardest crystal, invulnerable to conventional forces, through which various types of energy (Magic, Trump, Logrus, and/or Pattern; determined by the caster) cannot pass.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Casting Time: One and a Half Hours

Lynchpins: Additional ten minutes casting time each. Magic of Shadow (Optional for Logrus Sorcery), Target (Optional for Logrus Sorcery), Dispel Word (Optional), Protection Range (naming Magic, Trump, Logrus, and/or Pattern in any combination), Trigger.

Electric Porcupines

This spell summons a mass of floating, spiked metal balls, bristling with lightning, which are all drawn through the air toward the target as if by magnetism. Any that contact the target give an electric shock, numbing the part contacted; if enough hit, the target may be shocked into unconsciousness (Human or Chaos level endurance), incapacitated by muscle spasms (Amber endurance or only a few points), or merely annoyed (good rank in endurance).

Spell Type: Summoning.

Casting Time: One Hour

Lynchpins: Additional ten minutes casting time each. Magic of Shadow (Optional for Logrus Sorcery), Target (Optional for Logrus Sorcery), Number of Porcupines, Trigger.

...I used the spikard I wore to question the one I didn't. When I removed the shield in which I'd encased it, it commenced a steady litany, "Go to Mandor. Get crowned. See your brother. See your mother. Begin preparations."

Prince of Chaos

Imperatives

This spell produces an overriding desire in the target to follow a specified, simple, course of action, such as "See your brother. See your mother. Get crowned." More

complicated courses of action would require a different spell. In Prince of Chaos, such a spell is cast on the spikard Merlin is *supposed* to get; it is intended to affect the wearer.

Spell Type: Invasive.

Casting Time: Thirty Minutes

Lynchpins: Additional ten minutes casting time each. Magic of Shadow (Optional for Logrus Sorcery), Target (Optional for Logrus Sorcery), Dispel Word (Optional), Specific Imperatives (ten minutes per imperative).

Paralysis

A variant on the Basic Spell "Quell," this spell locks the target's voluntary muscles into spasm, preventing them from moving, casting spells, etc. (Since the spell doesn't affect the involuntary muscles, the target continues to breathe, pump blood, or whatever life-sustaining activities are normal for it.)

Spell Type: Invasive.

Casting Time: One Hour

Lynchpins: Additional ten minutes casting time each. Magic of Shadow (Optional for Logrus Sorcery), Target (Optional for Logrus Sorcery), Dispel Word (Optional), Duration (Optional).

Sound Capture

Mandor uses this spell to capture a "recording" of sound within a precious stone, playing it back later by speaking a command word.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Casting Time: One Hour

Lynchpins: Additional ten minutes casting time each. Magic of Shadow (Optional for Logrus Sorcery), Trigger, Command to Stop Recording, Play-back Command.

Well of Blackness

Blocks off all of the target's senses, leaving them alone in blackness and utter silence. Targets with Human psyche may be driven insane if this spell is kept on them long enough; targets with higher psyche are merely inconvenienced (and may, in fact, be able to locate their opponents using other "senses").

Spell Type: Summoning.

Casting Time: One Hour

Lynchpins: Additional ten minutes casting time each. Magic of Shadow (Optional for Logrus Sorcery), Target (Optional for Logrus Sorcery), Dispel Word (Optional), Duration (Optional).

MARTIN

"May I try it, father," Martin asked. "I've always wanted to."

"Why not?" Random said. "You still got that other round, Merlin?"

"Yes," I said, and I rummaged about in my pocket and brought out two. I passed them to Random. "One of these shouldn't work, anyway," I said. "It just got mixed in with the other two."

"All right."

Random accepted both, loaded one. He passed

the weapon to Martin then and began explaining its operation. In the distance I heard the sounds of alarm.

"We're about to have the entire palace guard descend upon us," I observed.

"Good," Random answered, as Martin raised the piece to his shoulder. "A little realistic drill every now and then never hurts."

The rifle roared and the armor rang a second time. Martin looked startled and quickly passed the weapon back to Random...

Trumps of Doom



That bullet was Martin's wake up call.

Here was Martin, sort of sitting around, complacently enjoying life in Amber, and out in pastoral Shadow. Not doing anything in particular. Just having a good time.

Then Merlin shows up, his old partner in skulduggery from the days of the Patternfall War, back when he and Merlin and Dara allied themselves with Oberon against the assembled might of Amber and the Courts of Chaos.

Suddenly Martin realizes he's been goofing off. Things are happening. Big, important, dangerous things.

Technological things.

Time for Martin to get moving...

MARTIN— AMBER'S ALTO SAX (200 POINT VERSION)

...I was started to hear an alto sax come in. When I looked again, Martin was standing, his back still to me, and playing the thing. It must have been on the floor on the other side of his chair. There was a Richie Cole flavor to it that I rather liked, and it kind of surprised me...

Knight of Shadows

Even though Martin has gone high-tech, and learned a lot of interesting things, he's still pretty laid back.

Sure, he's briefed himself on a bunch of technological developments, so he can do everything from drive a car to program a computer, and he enjoyed learning all about modern amusements.

Following up his interest in music, he ended up with a bunch of talented young musicians, got into a band or two, and spent a lot of time hanging around in after-hours clubs. He's able to play alto sax the regular way, or he can "plug in" and control a whole studio of synthesizer equipment and music computers.

Martin is, to say the least, now comfy with technology.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [15 Points]

STRENGTH = [20 Points]

ENDURANCE = [35 Points]

WARFARE = [50 Points]

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

PERSONAL ARTIFACTS & CREATURES

Cyber•Music Implant [10 Points] - Allows Martin to directly link—brain to computer—to different devices. Not only can he play instruments though his implant plug, he can also control war machines, vehicles, or even do sophisticated hacking into world-wide computer networks.

• Implant Quality [10 Points]

GOOD STUFF [5 Points]

MARTIN— CYBER•TAROIST (250 POINT VERSION)

As I passed out of the main hall and headed along the back hallway which would take me to any of a number of stairs, a fellow in black leathers and various pieces of rusty and shiny chain emerged from a corridor to my right, halted, and stared at me. His hair was of an orange Mohawk cut and there were several silver rings in his left ear near what looked like an electrical outlet of some sort.

"Merlin?" he said. "You okay?"

"For the moment," I replied as I drew nearer, trying to place him, there in the dimness.

"Martin!" I said. "You're...changed."

He chuckled.

"I'm just back from a very interesting shadow," he said. "Spent over a year there—one of those places where time runs like hell."

"I'd judge—just guessing—that it was high-tech, urban...."

"Right."

"I thought you were a country boy."

"I got over it...."

Sign of Chaos

Martin, like most Amberites, is pretty competitive.

Seeing that Merlin had spent eight years picking up a technical education, and assembling an amazing Trump machine, Martin knew he had to hustle to catch up.

And catching up wasn't good enough. Martin wanted to be better than Merlin.

So he headed out to a fast-time, cyberpunk-flavored, Hell-Shadow. Right off the bat, he learned that the quick way to massive learning was the direct method. Install an implant in your brain, and plug in.

Between music gigs and the street scene, Martin worked on his own version of the Ghostwheel project. It's called Cyber•Trump, and it gives Martin a real "hands-on" approach to Trump imaging.

Now Martin can do all the tricks of a "living Trump." He can instantly create Trump, and use them at the speed of thought. Plus, he's been working on interfacing with other computers and devices.

Through his neck plug, yes.

And, eventually, directly through a Trump image.

The question is now, did Martin ever get a good look at Merlin's Trump of Ghostwheel?

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [15 Points]

STRENGTH = Amber Rank

ENDURANCE = [25 Points]

WARFARE = [50 Points]

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

Trump Artistry [40 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

Conjuration [20 Points]

ARTIFACTS & CREATURES

Cyber•Trump Implant [31 Points] - Martin has taken Merlin's idea of Ghostwheel—a Trump computer—one high-tech step forward. The device is an amplifier and co-processor for Martin's own Trump abilities. Using this device he plans on out-Trumping even his old enemy, Brand.

- **Psychic Barrier [2 Points]**
- **Implant Quality [10 Points]**
- **Trump Powered Imaging [4 Points]**
- **Implant Power [15 Points]**

Cyber•Trump Appliances [4 Points] - Martin is still working on expanding the "options" that he can hook up to his implant. So far he's put together a hand-held imager, used for displaying his mental Trump (and also handy for playing video games), a printer that generates Trump cards, and an input device that allows him to plug into larger computers and download information and images (also converts digital pictures into patterns Martin can "see").

- **Named & Numbered Quantity [*2 Points]**
- **Trump Deck Images [2 Points]**

MARTIN—SOURCE OF BROKEN PATTERN (300 POINT VERSION)

"Goodness! Martin's changed!" he announced suddenly. "He looks like a one-man rock video. I almost didn't recognize him. Just last week—"

"It's been over a year," I said, "for him. He's been off finding himself on some street scene."

"I wonder if he's finished?"

"Didn't get a chance to ask him that," I replied, but a peculiar thought occurred to me. I shelved it.

Bill Roth & Merlin, in *Sign of Chaos*

Whenever we spot a plot in Amber it seems that there is always a triumvirate in the wings. Bleys, Brand and Fiona is one. Eric, Caine and Julian another. And then the new one, the one that consists of Dara, her son Merlin, and Martin.

Martin. Why Martin, of all people? After all, we can see the power of Dara, and of Merlin, but why would they recruit someone who seemed to have no particular power to offer?

Unless he did have power. Significant power.

Since Martin's blood was used to damage the Pattern... Is it possible that the image of the Broken Pattern is still related to Martin?

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [30 Points]

STRENGTH = [10 Points]

ENDURANCE = [10 Points]

WARFARE = [40 Points]

POWERS

Advanced Pattern Imprint [75 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

Conjuration [20 Points]

ARTIFACTS & CREATURES

Pattern Reality Implant [60 Points] - Designed to keep track of all Martin's Broken Patterns, and all those who have been initiated into its power. Martin can "map" all Broken Patterns, connecting them with the cracks that run through Shadow.

- **Tongues [4 Points]** - All machine languages.
- **Implant Quality [10 Points]**
- **Control Breaks in Shadow [8 Points]**
- **Implant Power [15 Points]**
- **Manipulate Multiple Shadows [8 Points]**
- **Implant Power [15 Points]**

CONSTRUCTS

"I happened upon a strange thing then," he continued, "a thing I had never before encountered, but which now seemed virtually omnipresent: In nearly all of the shadows through which I passed, there was a peculiar black road existing in some form or other. I did not understand it, but since it was the only thing I had come across which seemed to traverse Shadow itself, my curiosity was aroused. I resolved to follow it and learn more about it. It was dangerous. I learned very quickly not to tread the thing. Strange shapes seemed to travel it at night. Natural creatures which ventured upon it sickened and died. So I was careful. I went no nearer than was necessary to keep it in sight. I followed it through many places. I quickly learned that everywhere it ran there was death, desolation, or trouble nearby. I did not know what to make of it.

"I was still weak from my wound," he went on, "and I made the mistake of pressing myself, of riding too far, too fast, in a day's time. That evening, I fell ill and I lay shivering in my blanket through the night and much of the next day. I was into and out of delirium during this time, so I do not know exactly when she appeared. She seemed like part of my dream much of the while. A young girl. Pretty. She took care of me while I recovered. Her name was Dara. We talked interminably. It was very pleasant. Having someone to talk with like that... I must have told her my whole life story. Then she told me something of herself. She was not a native of the area in which I had collapsed. She said that she had traveled there through Shadow. She could not yet walk through it as we do, though she felt she could learn to do this, as she claimed descent from the House of Amber through Benedict. In fact, she wanted very badly to learn how it was done. Her means of travel then was the black road itself. She was immune to its noxious effects, she said, because she was also related to the dwellers at its farther end, in the Courts of Chaos. She wanted to learn our ways though, so I did my best to instruct her in those things that I did know. I told her of the Pattern, even sketched it for her. I showed her my Trumps—Benedict had given me a deck—to show her the appearance of her other relatives..."

Martin, in *The Hand of Oberon*

Broken Pattern Construct Array [40 Points] - Made of Martin's blood, fused with the image of the Pattern as damaged by Brand, all the various Broken Patterns are part of a Construct Array. All those who are initiates, or adepts, of the Broken Pattern, are dependent on Martin's power. He can observe them, manipulate the cracks they follow through Shadow, and even control them.

- **Broken Patterns [2 Points]**
 - Named & Numbered Quantity [*2 Points]
 - Power Source Shadows [1 Point Each]
- **Broken Power Manifestation [36 Points]**
 - Follow Shadow Path [2 Points]
 - Transfer Power [10 Points]
 - Manipulate Shadow Folk [2 Points]
 - Transfer Power [10 Points]
 - Broken Pattern Image [2 Points]
 - Transfer Power [10 Points]
- **Power-Based Psyche [2 Points]**

Game Master Tips for Role-Playing Martin

"The part that bothers me," he said. "After Dad had mounted and waved a good-bye, he looked back at me and said, 'And keep an eye on Martin.'"

Random, in *The Courts of Chaos*

Oberon cautioning Random about Martin? Why?

After all, isn't Martin just a harmless kid? Isn't he just the first of the next generation, without the brooding, threatening manner of his elders?

Well, maybe not.

He was, along with Merlin, one of Dara's cabal. One of the bold young trio that challenged both the Court of Amber and the Courts of Chaos. Which has got to take a certain amount of guts.

It's a good idea to assume that he's still thinking, still plotting, and making sure that he's got a strong base of power to deal with any eventuality.

Constant Allies and Enemies:

Merlin has a good relationship with his Father, Random. He also seems on friendly terms with the rest of the elder Amberites. As far as Merlin is concerned, they seem to be allies, but they haven't been working together lately.

MERLIN

...The opposite of my walk, a summons, brought an icy wind that swept the spell away like so much smoke. My garments were lashed about me, changing shape and color. Purple, gray... light the trousers and dark the cloak, the shirtfront. Black my boots and wide belt, my gauntlets tucked behind, my silver Frakir woven into a bracelet about my left wrist, visible now and shining. I raised my left hand and shielded my eyes with my right, as I summoned a flash of light.

"Be silent," I said then, "You offend me."

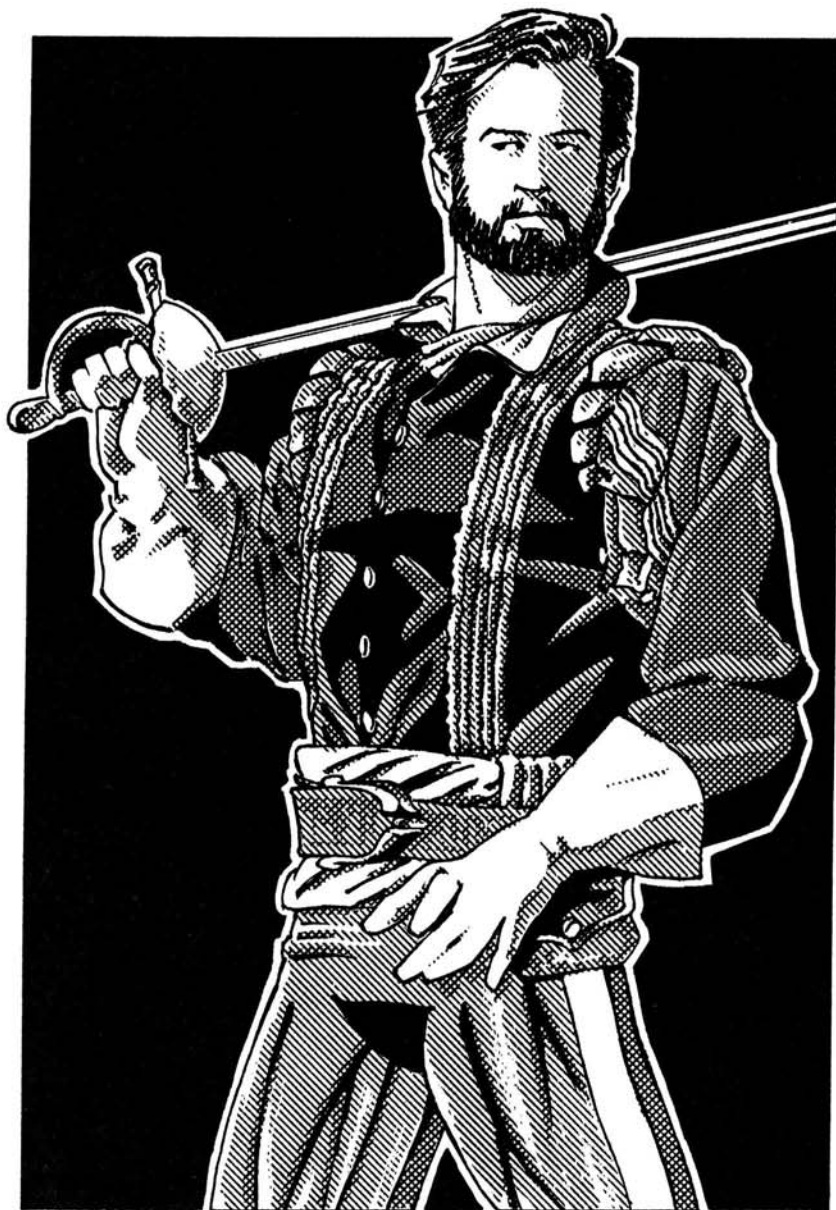
Trumps of Doom

"How come we turned out so normal?" I said.

He just stared at me for several seconds. Then he started to laugh.

"Well, I feel normal," I said.

Merlin & Luke, in Prince of Chaos



Of all the contradictions about Merlin, this is the strangest.

On the one hand we've got this Lord of Amber, this Prince of Chaos, brimming with power and potential, beset by cosmic forces, yet carrying it all off with a haughty attitude and a streak of nastiness.

The rest of the time Merlin seems like a normal guy.

Half Amberite, half computer geek.

You never know which side is going to come up heads, especially when he starts talking to people.

Of course, part of it has to come from his upbringing. His mom, Dara, had him specifically so he would be heir to the Throne of Amber, picking up the strong claim forwarded by his father, Corwin.

Which means he was treated differently.

When you're a kid, especially when you're a teenager, being different is the worst thing in the world. So Merlin grew up an outsider, with relatively few buddies.

Things changed when he went to college. He wasn't different any more, at least not in any way anybody noticed. Yet he ended up hanging around with another bunch of outsiders.

Consider that his best friends were Lucas Reynard, another Amberite in hiding, Gail Lampron, a demon in hiding, and Julia Barnes, a wizardress in hiding.

Come to think of it...

That explains a lot. Merlin is still insecure, he's still looking for friends.

Which means, maybe, that the best thing to come out of the whole Merlin Saga, for Merlin, is Luke. Here's a guy he's spent eight years with, and he finds out they're really equals. Both Amberites, both mages, both Trump Artists.

Finally, Merlin has a real friend.

MERLIN—MAN-CHILD IN THE COURTS (200 POINT VERSION)

"...you are sometimes appallingly naive, little brother, and I do not yet trust your judgment as to what is truly important."

Mandor, to Merlin, in Sign of Chaos

Oh, boy, was Merlin ever naive, but he's learned an interesting lesson.

You see, Merlin has learned how to give trust. How to convince other people that he trusts them. For elder Amberites, and the jaded Lords of the Courts of Chaos, it's downright disconcerting. It's not part of the game, man!

Merlin doesn't care. He's found good friends all over the place. Now he can count on support from buddies like Luke and Nayda, not to mention Ghostwheel and Corwin's Pattern. He's even managed to turn most of his enemies (more or less) toward his side.

Current Objectives.

...I'd always felt there was something noble, special, and honorable about seeking truth—a thing I'd attempted with Ghostwheel...

Sign of Chaos

He's on his way to take the throne of the Courts of Chaos, and to give it his best shot. Not only is he planning on ruling well, but he's also planning on bringing in a new way of doing business, based on truth, honesty, and fair play. Let's hope he lasts through the coronation.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Amber Rank

STRENGTH = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

ENDURANCE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

WARFARE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

Imprint of the Jewel of Judgement [10 Points]

Logrus Mastery [45 Points]

Trump Artistry [40 Points]

Shape Shifting [35 Points]

Spikard Sorcery [20 Points] - In addition to the spell casting Sorcery, Merlin can also combine his knowledge of spells with the many sources of Shadow power offered by the Spikard. So long as he wears the ring, Merlin can cast spells simply by accessing the correct lines, combining forces, and evoking the resultant magic.

ARTIFACTS & CREATURES

...I wore an invisible strangling cord possessed of some rather unusual virtues, woven about my left wrist. One of these virtues is that it generally warns me of nasty intentions aimed in my direction...

Trumps of Doom

Frakir, Strangling Cord [11 Points] - It communicates warnings by pulsing or squeezing. Useful as a weapon, a trap, as a warning device, and for changing odd bits of Shadow—like money into the local currency. Frakir can even slither into keyholes and pick locks.

- **Mobility [1 Point]** - Snake-like slithering.
- **Endless Stamina [4 Points]**
- **Combat Reflexes [2 Points]**
- **Danger Sense [2 Points]**
- **Mold Shadow Stuff [1 Point]**
- **Alternate Form [1 Point]** - Invisible.

...And then there was Ghostwheel, my cybernetic Trump dealer and minor-league mechanical demigod, who seemed to have evolved from rashi and manic to rational and paranoid—and I wasn't at all sure where he was headed from here, but at least he was showing some filial respect mixed in with the current cowardice."

Knight of Shadows

Ghostwheel [8 Points] - Merlin's Trump computer.

- **Extraordinary Psychic Sensitivity [4 Points]**
- **Trump Powered [4 Points]**

I may have given the impression that I would rather pull on a pair of Adidas and jog through Shadow than plunge through on the back of a beast driven half-mad by the changes going on about it. Or ride a bicycle. Or hop through on a pogo stick.

Nor would this impression be incorrect. It is not that I don't know how to drive the things. It is just that I'd never been particularly fond of them. Admitted, I never had the use of one of those wonder horses, such as Julian's Morganstern, Dad's Star or Benedict's Glemdenning, which stood to mortal horses in terms of lifespan, strength and endurance as did Amberites to the inhabitants of most shadows.

I looked all about, but could detect no injured rider....

"Merlin!" I heard Luke call, but my attention was nearer at hand. I advanced slowly, not wanting to upset him further. "Are you all right?"

I had simply put in an order for a horse. Any old hay burner would have served, for purposes of keeping up with my companions.

I found myself looking at an absolutely lovely animal—black and orange-striped like a tiger. In this, he resembled Glemdenning with his red and white striping. In that I didn't know where Benedict's mount came from either, I was glad to let it be the place of magic.

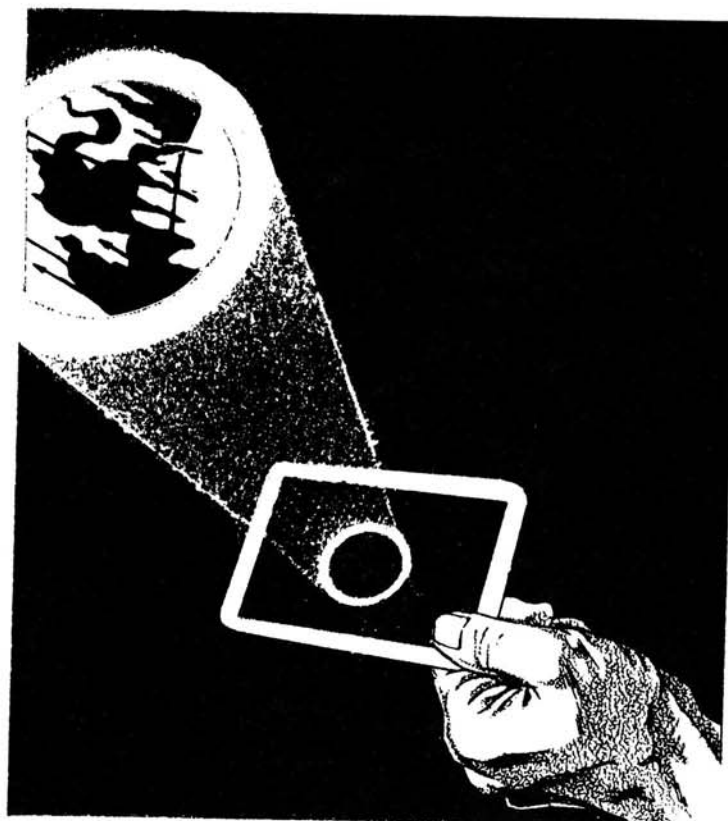
Prince of Chaos

Tiger [10 Points] - Merlin's new horse.

- **Amber Vitality [4 Points]**
- **Engine Speed [4 Points]**
- **Amber Stamina [2 Points]**

GOOD STUFF

[1 Point]



MERLIN—

KNAVE OF CHAOS

(250 POINT VERSION)

It was Julia, in a blue silk wrap.

"Merlin!"

I crossed to her.

"I owe you several apologies," I said. "I'm ready to make them."

"I'd heard you were back. I heard you were to be king."

"Funny, I heard that, too."

"Then it would be unpatriotic of me to stay mad, wouldn't it?"

"I never meant to hurt you," I said. "Physically, or any other way."

Suddenly, we were holding each other. It lasted a long time before she told me, "Jurt says you're friends now."

"I guess we sort of are."

I kissed her.

"If we got back together again," she said, "he'd probably try to kill you again."

"I know. This time the consequences could really be cataclysmic, too."

"Where are you going right now?"

"I'm on an errand, and it's going to take me several hours."

"Why don't you stop by when you're finished? We've got a lot to talk about. I'm staying in a place called the Wisteria Room for now. Know where that is?"

"Yes," I said. "This is crazy."

"See you later?"

"Maybe."

Prince of Chaos

Does Merlin have no sense at all? Isn't this, like, the stupidest thing imaginable?

He just, finally, managed to make peace with his brother Jurt. Who is, by the way, a hundred times more dangerous than ever before. And Jurt has already admitted that he's in love with Julia.

Now Merlin is kissing in the kitchen with Julia, has something going with Coral (who is carrying his child), and he's gotten chummy with Gilva of Hendrake—plus he snuck a kiss from Rhanda, his old childhood sweetie.

No wonder Julia turned psychotic, put on a mask, and made Merlin's life a living hell. It's a wonder she didn't kill him.

Current Objectives.

The figure in the vicinity of my left foot did an about-face and stood staring down at me. She wore a blue robe, but there was no mask upon her fire-reddened face. There was only a tight smile, which went away when she licked her lips. It was Julia, and there was a knife in her right hand.

"Always the smartass," she said. "Ready with a flippant answer to any situation. It's a cover for your unwillingness to commit yourself to anything or anyone. Even those who love you."

"It could just be a sense of humor, too," I said, "a thing I'm beginning to realize you never possessed."

She shook her head slowly.

"You keep everyone at arms' distance. There is no trust in you."

"Runs in the family," I said. "But prudence does not preclude affection."

She had begun raising the blade, but she faltered for a second.

"Are you saying that you still care about me?" she asked.

"I never stopped," I said. "It's just that you came on too strong all of a sudden. You wanted more of me than I was willing to give just then."

"You lie," she said, "because I hold your life in my hand."

"I could think of worse reasons for lying," I said. "But, unfortunately, I'm telling the truth."

There came another familiar voice then, from off to my right.

"It was too early for us to speak of such things," she said, "but I begrudge her your affection."

Turning my head, I saw that this figure, too, now faced inward, and it was Coral and her right eye was covered by a black patch and she, too, held a knife in her right hand. Then I saw what was in her left hand, and I shot a glance back at Julia. Yes, they both held forks as well as knives.

"*Et tu*," I said.

"I told you I don't speak English," Coral replied.

"*Et by two*," Julia responded, raising her utensils. "Who says I don't have a sense of humor?"

They spit at each other across me, some of the spittle not quite going the distance.

Luke, it occurred to me, might have tried settling matters by proposing to both of them on the spot. I'd a feeling it wouldn't work for me, so I didn't.

"This is an objectification of marriage neurosis," I said. "It's a projective experience. It's a

vivid dream. It's—"

Julia dropped to one knee, and her right hand flashed downward. I felt the blade enter my left thigh.

My scream was interrupted when Coral drove her fork into my right shoulder.

Knight of Shadows

Well, it is a dream—sort of—and no, it doesn't make a whole lot of sense.

Except maybe it does.

Merlin has difficulties with women, even to the point of dreaming about being eaten by those who love him.

It seems he's going to keep right on making mistakes.

Especially with women.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [10 Points]

STRENGTH = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

ENDURANCE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

WARFARE = Amber Rank

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

Initiate of the Jewel of Judgement [10 Points]

Logrus Mastery [45 Points]

Trump Artistry [40 Points]

Shape Shifting [35 Points]

Power Words [10 Points] - Burst of Magic, Burst of Psyche, Lifeforce, Spark and Process Surge.

Sorcery [15 Points]

Conjuration [20 Points]

ARTIFACTS & CREATURES

I placed my left hand upon the doorknob and gave Frakir a silent command. She unwound two turnings of her coil from about my wrist, coming into view as she moved across the lock plate and slithered into the keyhole. There followed a tightening, a stiffening and several rigid movements.

A soft click meant the bolt was drawn, and I turned the knob and pulled gently. The door opened. Frakir returned to bracelethood and invisibility.

Blood of Amber

Frakir, Logrus Item [30 Points] - Merlin calls her a "piece of idiosyncratic personal magic," and she has been enhanced with the powers of a Logrus tendril. When Merlin first walked the Pattern, Frakir recorded that image as well.

• Epic Vitality [8 Points] - Strong enough to pull a

solid wall of solidified coral into pieces.

- Mobility [1 Point]
- Endless Stamina [4 Points]
- Combat Reflexes [2 Points]
- Invulnerable [4 Points]
- Danger Sense [2 Points]
- Mold Shadow Stuff [1 Point]
- Alternate Form [1 Point] - Invisible.
- Tendril of the Logrus [6 Points]
- Image of Pattern [2 Points]

CONSTRUCTS

"Top secret, hush-hush, Merle Corey project. Ghostwheel," he answered. "Computer design incorporating shit nobody's ever seen before. Liquid semiconductors, cryogenic tanks, plasma—"

Luke, in Trumps of Doom

Ghostwheel [5 Points] - With Ghost, Merlin has achieved something radically new. He built a computer capable of creating, storing, processing and accessing a huge volume of Trump images. Merlin also lavished some attention on Ghostwheel's Shadow, arranging for it to have very strange properties, as well as a maze-like barrier to keep out intruders. On the other hand, he created no manifestation. As a Trump Artist he simply made a Trump card of Ghostwheel to serve as his means of communication.

- The Ghostwheel Shadow [4 Points]
 - Personal Shadow [1 Point]
 - Control of Contents [1 Point]
 - Access Barriers [2 Points]
- No Manifestation
- Psychic Sensitivity [1 Point]

"What the hell's a spikard?"

So I told him the story.

"That's why you were so flashy back in the church when you were fighting with Jurt?" he said.

"That's right."

"Let's see it."

I tried to pull it off, but it wouldn't pass the knuckle. So I simply extended my hand. Luke reached for it. His fingers halted a couple of inches above it.

"It's holding me off, Merle. Protective little devil."

"Hell," I said, "I'm not a shapeshifter for nothing." I took hold of it then, slimmed my finger suddenly, and slid it off. "Here."

He held it in the palm of his left hand as we bounced along, regarding it through narrowed

eyes. Suddenly, I felt dizzy. Withdrawal symptoms from the thing? I forced myself upright, reversed my breathing, refused to let it show.

"Heavy," Luke said at last. "I can feel the power there. Other things, too. It won't let me in, though."

I reached for it and he drew his hand away.

"I can feel it in the air all around us," he said. "Merle, this thing lays a spell on anybody who wears it."

I shrugged.

"Yes," I said. "A benign one, though. It's done nothing to harm me, and it's helped me a number of times."

"But can you trust anything that came to you in such an odd way—almost by trickery, caused you to abandon Frakir when she tried to warn you about it, and for all you knew has been subtly influencing your behavior ever since you put it on?"

"I admit to a kind of disorientation at first," I said, "but I think that was just in the way of accommodation to the levels of voltage it draws. I've been back to normal for some time now."

"How can you tell for sure? Maybe it's brainwashed you."

"Do I seem brainwashed to you?"

"No. I was just trying to say that I wouldn't completely trust anything with such questionable credentials."

"Well-taken," I agreed, holding forth my hand. "But so far the benefits have outweighed any hypothetical dangers. Consider me warned, and I'll take my chances."

He handed it back.

"If I think it's making you act weird I'm going to hit you over the head and pull it off, though."

"Fair enough," I said, slipping it back on. Immediately, I felt a rush of energy throughout my system as the lines of control were re-established.

Prince of Chaos

Spikard Construct [Zero Points] - While Merlin commands the Spikard, the Spikard also commands Merlin. His personality is being altered, so he is more haughty, and he also seems blind to the drawbacks of wearing such a thing. This could be either the influence of Delwin and Bleys, who provided the ring, or it could be part of the Spikard's own attempts to free itself.

• **Countless Spikard Power Sources [3 Points]**

- Countless Quantity [*3 Points]
- Power Source Shadows [1 Point Each]

• **Ring Manifestation [24 Points]**

- flux-Pin Connections [*3 Points]
- Spell Processor [8 Points]

• **Power-Based Psyche [+27 Points]** - Because the Psyche is used against the wearer, imposing changes and restrictions, it's actually an active pool of Bad Stuff.

• **Addictive Power Rush [+8 Points]** - Merlin just can't seem to say no to temptation, whether offered by a female, or a new power source. With the ring on, he feels a constant rush of power. With it off, he feels weak and woozy.

• **Lines of Control [+8 Points]** - The wearer's personality is warped, so that Merlin behaves differently, responding as the spikard wishes him to.

• **Mental Haze [+3 Points]** - Discourages the wearer from questioning or thinking about any negative effects of the item.

• **Protective Barrier [+8 Points]** - Prevents itself from being removed, from being probed by other minds, or even from being touched.

MERLIN—

POWER MONGER

(300 POINT VERSION)

Power, in its many shapes, varieties, sizes and styles, continues to fascinate me. It has been so much a part of my life for so long that I feel very familiar with it, though I doubt that I will ever understand it fully.

Blood of Amber

From the very first, Merlin wanted a piece of every power he could lay his hands on.

Shape Shifting? He'll have some of that. Trump? Yes, thank you. Magic? A double helping, please. Logrus? Absolutely!

In the "Prolog" to *Trumps of Doom*, Suhuy tells Merlin, "I had not judged you ready to essay the Logrus for a long while yet." Called him a "lucky fool" to have made it.

Pattern? Bearing in mind, of course, that Suhuy expected it to kill him, he took it.

The Spikard? Mmmm, he had trade to Frakir to get it, but it was too powerful to pass up.

If he hadn't actually witnessed Jasra's enslavement of Sharu Garrul into the Fount of Power, Merlin probably would have insisted on a bath before dinner.

Current Objectives.

But for a moment, I wondered. What would it feel like to control a massive state? Every time I complained about politics, here, in Amber, back in the State on the Shadow Earth, there was the automatic corollary of considering the way I'd manage situations if I were in charge. What would it feel like, anyway?

Prince of Chaos

Merlin can't pass up political power any more than he could pass up another helping of Mandor's dessert.

Whether he can hold the throne (assuming, of course, that he manages to take it in the first place), is still an open question. Whether he can keep the throne and keep from becoming a tool of either his relatives, or of greater powers, is an even bigger question.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [10 Points]

STRENGTH = Amber Rank

ENDURANCE = Amber Rank

WARFARE = Amber Rank

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

Initiation to the Jewel of Judgement [10 Points]

Logrus Mastery [45 Points]

Trump Artistry [40 Points]

Shape Shifting [35 Points]

Artifact Command Words [10 Points] - Merlin has invented a set of Power Words designed to be used with personal artifacts. They include Attack, Guard Word (switch to protective mode), Suppression (go to low alert), Release (negate any other control words), and Return.

Sorcery [15 Points]

Conjuration [20 Points]

CONSTRUCTS

"It's not just social AI. It's downright antisocial," she replied. "I think your machine is crazy."

"What did it do? I asked. "Attack you?"

"No, nothing physical. It's wacky and mendacious and insulting, and we're too busy to go into details right now. I'm not saying it couldn't get nasty, though. I don't know. We just wanted to warn you not to trust it."

Fiona & Merlin, in Sign of Chaos

Ghostwheel [7 Points] - With Ghost, Merlin has achieved something radically new. He built a computer capable of creating, storing, processing and accessing a huge volume of Trump.

Merlin lavished some attention on Ghostwheel's Shadow, arranging for it to have very strange properties, as well as a maze-like barrier to keep out intruders. On the other hand, he created no manifestation. As a Trump Artist he simply made a Trump card of Ghostwheel to serve as his means of communication.

Since being created, Ghostwheel has continued to grow and develop, becoming an independent and sentient being. Along the way it mastered the Logrus without being a Shape Shifter, and attuned itself to the Jewel of Judgment without ever walking the Pattern.

• The Ghostwheel Shadow [5 Points]

• Personal Shadow [1 Point]

• Control of Time flow [2 Points]

• Access Barriers [2 Points]

• No Manifestation

• Power-Based Psyche [2 Points]

The spikard made it easier than working out a transform spell. It was like a spell processor. I fed it the two end products, and it ran thousands of variations in a trice and handed me the finished products—a pair of spells it would have taken me a long while to work out along classical lines. I raised my hand as I hung them and accessed one of the many power sources the thing commanded off in Shadow. I fed juice into the constructs, watched the change commence, dropped my hand, and leaned forward.

Prince of Chaos

Spikards [80 Points] - Merlin possesses two ring Spikards, and there could be as many as nine, or more, not all in the form of rings. One of Merlin's rings was once worn by old King Swayvill, a ring which Mandor hung with control spells. The other ring came into Merlin's keeping via Delwin and Bleys.

- **Countless Spikard Power Sources [6 Points]**
 - Countless Quantity [*3 Points]
 - Shadow of Power [1 Point Each]
 - Control of Contents [1 Point]
- **Ring Manifestation [72 Points]**
 - flux-Pin Connections [*3 Points]
 - Named & Numbered Quantity [*2 Points]
 - Limited Shape Shift [4 Points]
 - Spell Processor [8 Points]
- **Power-Based Psyche [2 Points]**

BAD STUFF

[+2 Points]

GAME MASTER TIPS FOR ROLE-PLAYING MERLIN

"Strange, the relatives life gives us," she said.

I looked at her, tried to read her expression, couldn't. So, "Yes," I said.

She studied me for a moment, but I wasn't giving anything away either. So, "When you were a child you went monosyllabic as a sign of petulance," she said.

"Yes," I said.

We began eating. There were more flashes out over the still, dark sea. By light of the last one I thought I caught sight of a distant ship, black sails full rigged and bellied.

"You kept your engagement with Mandor earlier?"

"Yes."

"How is he?"

"Fine."

Prince of Chaos

He's a moody guy, Merlin.

Sometimes, when you least expect it, he'll talk his head off, explaining all his plans, detailing his adventures, and speculating on all the ways he believes the world is currently working.

Then, if he gets hit with an odd suspicion, or if somebody rubs him the wrong way, he'll clam up.

Same thing applies if someone is expecting help from Merlin.

There are times when he'll rush into action, jumping right into things to rescue a buddy, or a maiden in distress, damning the obstacles.

On the other hand, if something stops Merlin's headlong helpful rush, he'll take a more cautious approach. And Merlin's ideas about precautions can take forever. He'll want to make preparations, sorcerous and otherwise, wandering off into Shadow for a particular weapon or component, or consulting his Trump to see if he can get some opinions from a few other folk (and not necessarily people who are friendly with the poor victim).

Often, he'll get caught up in other things, until the whole problem just slips out of his mind.

Moody and a little maddening, that's Merlin.

MERLIN AS A PLAYER IN THE GAMES OF THE AMBER COURT

"You're the son of a Prince of Amber. What does that make you?"

"You mean titles? I'm Duke of the Western Marches and Earl of Kolvir."

"What does that mean?"

"It means I'm not a Prince of Amber. Nobody has to worry about me scheming, no vendettas involving the succession—"

*Bill Roth & Merlin, in *Trumps of Doom**

Merlin is hoping to avoid all the games, the intrigue and the political confusion of Amber. After all, he's got his hands full in the Courts of Chaos.

MERLIN AS A PLAYER IN THE GAMES OF THE COURTS OF CHAOS

Being the next in line for the throne of the Courts of Chaos certainly has Merlin involved in the politics of the place. Still, he's more likely to let others play him as a piece, than to try manipulating anyone else.

Constant Allies & Enemies:

Allies seem to be popping up everywhere. Coral, Dalt, Gilva, Julia, Jurt, Mandor, and Nayda are all in his corner. Luke, while not exactly trustworthy, is definitely Merlin's best buddy. Martin, his old ally from the Patternfall War, is probably Merlin's most reliable friend, even if Merlin rarely calls him for help. All of the elder Amberites seem to like Merlin. And he can count on unmeasured love and support from Corwin, and from Corwin's pal Bill Roth. As for enemies, strange as it may seem, his worst enemy is his own mother, Dara.

MERLIN'S BOOK OF SPELLS

by Cathy Klessig & Erick Wujcik

...The color was a little off, but I suddenly recalled a spell which altered it...

Knight of Shadows

Alter Object Aspect

One of those beginner "practice" spells that master sorcerers tend to forget about. All it does is slightly modify some small detail of Shadow. It's usually easier to change objects by manipulating Shadow directly.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Base Casting Time: Fifteen Minutes.

Lynchpins: Additional five minutes of casting time each. Magic of Shadow, Aspect Affected (Color, Texture, Scent, etc.), and Type of Alteration. Note that this is a pretty quick spell, so usually it's not "racked," and lynchpins aren't usually used.

Charm

Commonly cast on a garment or piece of jewelry. When the item is worn, everyone will treat the wearer as if he or she were more attractive, or more charming. It only works face-to-face, in situations where the charmed object can be seen. Once cast on an object, the spell will last for years, provided it remains in the same Shadow. Moving to a different Shadow will dispel it, however, as will Power Word Magic Negation, a Magic Drain spell, or other anti-magic measures.

Spell Type: Invasive.

Base Casting Time: One Hour.

Lynchpins: Additional five minutes of casting time

each. Description of Object, Magic of Shadow, Duration (Optional), Dispel Word (Optional).

Variation: A Reverse version is also possible, giving the wearer a bad impression.

...My Concerto for Cuisinart and Microwave spell would have minced him and parboiled him in an instant, but it was useless to me when I could not speak the guide words.

Knight of Shadows

Concerto for Cuisinart and Microwave

For some reason, the triggering gesture for this spell is a quick motion of the finger, as if throwing a switch. (Okay, so Merlin has a strange sense of humor.) At once, the target area is flooded with enough microwave radiation to fry frozen chicken. At the same time, thousands of tiny, razor-sharp blades of pure energy materialize at the area's edges, and move through it in quick, dancing patterns, slicing and dicing anything they encounter. None of them can materialize inside a living body and, since the spell is instantaneous, most of the damage is done to the outer surface of a victim. When the spell ends the radiation, blades, and barrier vanish, to the sound of a musical: "Ping!"

Spell Type: Summoning.

Base Casting Time: Two Hours.

Lynchpins: Additional twenty minutes of casting time each. Magic of Shadow, Directional Guide Word, Target Size Guide Word.

Curtain of Chaos

A chittering curtain of destructive gray space forms. Energy is dissipated, and physical objects moving through the curtain will be instantly reduced to cosmic dust. This has been known to frustrate archers. It cannot be generated within a living body. Restricted to initiates of the Logrus.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Base Casting Time: One Hour.

Lynchpins: Additional ten minutes of casting time each. Magic of Shadow, Directional Guide Word, Curtain Size Guide Word, Duration (Optional), Dispel (Optional).

Deep Freeze

Opens a channel to a Shadow realm chilled to absolute zero. The resultant cold instantly freezes the air outward.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Base Casting Time: Thirty Minutes.

Lynchpins: Additional five minutes of casting time each. Magic of Shadow, Directional Guide Word.

...I rushed forward, regretting only that I had not had time to envenom my blade...

Trumps of Doom

Envenom

A handy combat spell, used to coat a blade or point with a poisonous substance. While it's usually used in the Courts of Chaos to make weapons effective against Shape Shifters, other kinds of poisons can be specified.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Base Casting Time: Thirty Minutes.

Lynchpins: Additional five minutes of casting time each. Magic of Shadow, Size of Blade (Optional, if not specified it will cover the size of Merlin's favorite blade style), Type of Poison (Optional, if not specified the poison will be an acid that burns flesh and prevents the rapid healing of a shape shifter or regeneration).

Evict Possessing Entity

Drives away a spirit or disembodied intelligence, forcing it out of the possessed body.

Spell Type: Invasive.

Base Casting Time: Thirty Minutes.

Lynchpins: Additional five minutes of casting time each. Name/Description of Target, Magic of Shadow.

Falling Wall

A square area of force forms wherever the caster directs, limited only by the caster's range of sight. The "wall" forms parallel to the ground, and then falls with the same amount of force as if it had been a foot-thick brick wall. Normally, the Falling Wall disappears when it hits the ground. If something prevents it from doing so, it will strain against whatever is holding it up for about thirty

seconds, and then disappear.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Base Casting Time: One Hour.

Lynchpins: Additional ten minutes of casting time each. Location of Target Area, Directional Guide Word, Size of Wall, Magic of Shadow.

Fantasia for Six Acetylene Torches

The caster points at a person or object, and six points of intense, blue-white flame dart from the caster's finger and take up close orbits around the target. The flames do a mad dance, with the point of each flame always focused toward the target's center. A target in armor will be roasted like a lobster in its shell. If there is no armor, the effect is even worse, since the full force of the flames will be felt.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Base Casting Time: One Hour.

Lynchpins: Additional ten minutes of casting time each. Name/Description of Target, Magic of Shadow, Directional Guide Word, Duration (Optional), Dispel Word (Optional).

Fire Fountain

The caster can point, and a literal fountain of burning liquid spurts from the pointing finger. This is rather like a magical flame thrower. The burning liquid continues to jet forth for a maximum of thirty seconds. It will stick to skin, scales, clothing, etc., and continue burning for several minutes.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Base Casting Time: One Hour.

Lynchpins: Additional ten minutes of casting time each. Magic of Shadow, Duration (Optional), Dispel Word (Optional).

Variations: The caster points at the ground, anywhere within sight range, and the fountain will spring up from that point. This version requires an additional lynchpin—Location of Target Area.

Fourth of July Spell

The caster points at a location, anywhere within sight but usually in midair. Immediately, a whole series of bright, multicolored fireworks flood out from that central point, filling the area with bright flashes of color, accompanied by loud bangs and whistles.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Base Casting Time: One Hour.

Lynchpins: Additional ten minutes of casting time each. Location of Target Area, Magic of Shadow, Directional Guide Word, Range Guide Word, Size of Display, Duration (Optional), Dispel Word (Optional).

Giant's Slap

The caster claps his or her hands, and a magical force "slaps" the impact point. The degree of force can be greater

or less, depending on how hard the hands are clapped: it can be gentle enough to simply knock over a table, or hard enough to bash in a heavy door.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Base Casting Time: Thirty Minutes

Lynchpins: Additional five minutes of casting time each. Location of Impact, Magic of Shadow.

I raised my right arm and pronounced my most useless and at the same time flashiest spell. The ground erupted before him, showering him with dirt and gravel. He stepped back and wiped his face, then looked down into the rough trench that had appeared.

Sign of Chaos

Gravedigger

Requires actual ground. For example, it will not work on solid rock, or in Tir-na Nog'th. The caster points at the ground, and the earth flies up and forms a mound to one side, leaving a trench about three feet by seven feet, and six feet deep. Designed as a gesture of intimidation.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Base Casting Time: One Hour

Lynchpins: Additional ten minutes of casting time each. Location of Target Area, Magic of Shadow.

Icy Path

The caster points in a line along the ground, and a sheen of slippery ice forms along that path.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Base Casting Time: Thirty Minutes

Lynchpins: Additional five minutes of casting time each. Directional Guide Word, Range Guide Word, Magic of Shadow, Dispel Word (Optional).

Illusionary Persona

The caster gestures at someone, and visualizes their desired appearance. At once, they appear in that fashion, and this will last for several days, unless cancelled. The spell can be cast on oneself, or on another person. It's only an illusion.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Base Casting Time: Thirty Minutes

Lynchpins: Additional five minutes of casting time each. Name/Description of Target, Name/Description of New Appearance, Magic of Shadow, Duration (Optional), Dispel Word (Optional).

Levitate

An extremely complex and difficult spell.

Once the spell is released, the caster concentrates, and rises up into the air. It's possible to fly forward, backward, bank and turn, etc. The only danger is, if the caster's concentration slips, even for a moment, the spell is lost, and the caster will fall like a rock. This will almost

certainly happen if anyone hits the caster, either physically or with a spell. Sometimes, just yelling at the caster will do it; anything that causes startlement. Even the impact of the caster hitting someone else can shatter the spell; it's very hard to fight while levitating, and the use of any powers—even triggering a Trump—is impossible.

Levitate can be cast on someone else but it's unlikely another person will know how to control the levitation. Unless one knows the spell, or has been "briefed" with a Psychic contact, nothing is likely to happen.

However, the one who levitates can carry along anything or anyone he or she is able to lift. People who are carried don't have to concentrate.

Spell Type: Invasive.

Base Casting Time: Three Hours.

Lynchpins: Additional ten minutes of casting time each. Name/Description of Target (Optional), Magic of Shadow.

I raised my left fist, caused the spikard to create a globe of white light as a bubble pipe does a bubble. It was about three feet in diameter when I released it to drift overhead. Suddenly, the place was filled with babbling. Others of sorcerous background having exercised their favorite illumination spells at about the same time I had, the temple was now over-illuminated from dozens of point-sources.

Prince of Chaos

Light

There are a variety of light spells. These vary from simple, momentary flashes, to floating balls of light that follow the caster wherever he or she may go, anchored with a tether of magical force. Most mages have favorite light spells, often very distinctive.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Base Casting Time: Thirty Minutes.

Lynchpins: Additional five minutes of casting time each. Description of Target Location, Magic of Shadow, Duration, Constant Position Relative to Target Object (Optional), Color (Optional), Dispel Word (Optional).

Trump Image Enhancement

The simplest form of Trump Enhancement merely provides extra energy for making a Trump contact. This is, in effect, a burst of Psyche, like the Power Word of the same name. It can also be useful for breaking a Trump contact, or defending oneself against psychic attack, including one which accompanies an invasive spell.

Spell Type: Invasive.

Base Casting Time: Thirty Minutes.

Lynchpins: Additional five minutes of casting time each. Name/Description of Trump Subject, Magic of Shadow.

"Have a nice day, anyway," I said, and I rotated my wrists, pointed my fingers to direct the flow and spoke the word that beat him to the punch.

"An eye for an eye!" I called out, as the contents of an entire florist shop fell upon Mask, completely burying him in the biggest damned bouquet I'd ever seen. Smelled nice, too.

There was silence and a subsidence of forces as I regarded the Trump, reached through it. Just as the contact was achieved there was a disturbance in the floral display and Mask rose through it, like the Allegory of Spring.

I was probably already fading from his view as he said, "I'll have you yet."

"And sweets to the sweet," I replied, then spoke the word that completed the spell, dropping a load of manure upon him.

Blood of Amber

Twin Transmission

This is Merlin's improvement over Julia's Special Delivery spell (see Julia's Book of Spells). As a piece of sorcerer's bravado, Merlin took the original spell and improved upon it, increasing the volume of material summoned, and also doubling the effect, so that it works in two parts.

Spell Type: Summoning.

Casting Time: Forty-Five Minutes.

Lynchpins: Additional five minutes casting time each. Magic of Shadow, Name of Shadow Destination, First Component Type (Optional, unless specified the result will be a mixed bouquet), First Trigger Gesture, Second Component Type (Optional, unless specified the result will be a load of manure), Second Trigger Gesture, Quantity (Optional).

NAYDA THE TY'IGA



"The creature you see before you, inhabiting a not unattractive human form, is a *ty'iga*," he explained.

I stared. The *ty'iga* were a normally bodiless race of demons that dwelled in the blackness beyond the Rim. I recalled being told that they were very powerful and very difficult to control.

Mandor & Merlin,
in *Sign of Chaos*

This *Ty'iga* has gone through one heck of a culture shock.

From life as a spirit, floating through dark chaotic realms, it was forced into a life here on Shadow Earth.

So many changes, so much to learn. Not only in terms of adjusting to life on the physical level, but also getting used to modern American life.

In the guise of Gail Lampron, the *Ty'iga* managed to fool those around her, even to the extent of being Luke's lover for years. As Merlin pointed out, she's "probably the only *ty'iga* with a degree from Berkeley."

She's also had experience in quite a few other bodies. For example, she got killed as Dan Martinez, trying to save Merlin from Luke; tried to gather information as Bill Roth's young neighbor, George Hansen; had a one-night stand with Merlin as Meg Devlin; and saved Merlin once again as a mysterious lady on horseback.

It wasn't until she showed up as Vinta Bayle, Caine's old girlfriend, that Merlin realized that all these people were really one person.

Now that one person has taken on a new identity, one that she seems destined to wear indefinitely.

The body is that of Nayda, half-sister to Coral, and daughter of the Begman Ambassador to the Court of Amber. It's a body that's known to Luke, Jasra, and Dalt. It's also a body that has the position to travel freely every where from Amber to the Courts of Chaos.

As for the *Ty'iga* itself, it claims to have been released from its service to Dara, and to have found a love for Luke.

The problem is, just how far can we trust this *Ty'iga*? Even as Nayda, it remains an entity with no name.

NAYDA— TRAPPED TY'IGA (25 POINT VERSION)

I passed along the hallway and decided to use the back stair. As I made the turn, I saw that there was a figure standing near the top. It was a woman, and she was looking the other way. She had on a full-length red-and-yellow gown. Her hair was very dark and she had lovely shoulders...

Sign of Chaos

The Ty'iga, having entered into Nayda's body at the point of death, has permanently trapped herself in this body. For all practical purposes, the Ty'iga is now Nayda, daughter of Orkuz, the Begman Prime Minister, and half-sister to Coral.

Because of the fusion of the human and demon selves, Nayda has become strong and vibrant, not unlike a younger Amberite. Nor has she lost her demonic intuition. She is still, in the eyes of other demons, a demon born.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Amber Rank
STRENGTH = Amber Rank
ENDURANCE = Amber Rank
WARFARE = Amber Rank

POWERS

Nayda raised her left hand and moved it in a slow pattern—behind Jasra's neck and down her back, across her chest, then downward again. I did not recognize any of the movements she was performing.

"Don't tell me that you're a sorceress, too," I said. "It seems that everyone I run into these days has had some training in the Art."

"I am not a sorceress," she answered, "and I've had no such training. I have only one trick and it is not sorcery, but I use it for everything."

Sign of Chaos

Magical Intuition [25 Points] - To Nayda, magic is a force that she can see and feel. She can feel those who manipulate magic, and she can sense any local shifting of Shadow. In some places, such as Castle Amber, this is relatively weak, but in places like a Black Road, she is able to sense much of her environment. She also sees the auras that surround people and creatures, so she can

quickly identify Construct-Ghosts, or those who are the victims of enchantments.

NAYDA— FREE-LANCE DEMONESS (50 POINT VERSION)

"I thought you were supposed to be protecting me!" I shouted after her.

"This takes precedence," she answered, "over your mother's binding."

"What?" I said. "My mother?"

"She placed me under a geas to take care of you when you went off to school," she replied. "This breaks it! Free at last!"

Merlin & Nayda, in Knight of Shadows

Compared to her new freedom, all of Nayda's earlier life as a demon is repugnant. She has no desire to go back to her true form, and she's delighted to be able to spend the rest of her life in her adopted body.

Since she's come to enjoy the pleasures of flesh, both physical and the accompanying emotional rushes, Nayda is following Luke, the man whom she has found most enjoyable.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]
STRENGTH = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]
ENDURANCE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]
WARFARE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

POWERS

She ignored the query and dipped her right forefinger into a bit of spilled coffee within her saucer. She then used it to trace three circles around the massed stones, widdershins. Then she nodded again and returned to her seat. I'd summoned the vision in time to see her build a cage of force about them. Now, as I continued to watch, it seemed as if they were exhaling faint wisps of blue smoke that remained within the circle.

"I thought you said you weren't a sorcerer."

"I'm not," she replied.

Blood of Amber

Magic Manipulation [40 Points] - Not only can Nayda sense magic, magical auras, and the lines of magic

running through Shadow, but she can also reach out and influence the magical energy. Channeling the magic through her body, the *Ty'iga* can form lines, walls and even cages of magical energy. Usually these things last only a short time, but she can also weave them into complex braids that can be more durable.

Demonic Shape Shifting [50 Points] - The *Ty'iga* can manipulate the Nayda body, either changing it into a demonic form, or changing it internally, shifting her Attributes.

NAYDA— QUEEN OF DEMONS (100 POINT VERSION)

"Of course," I said. "It seems to show you'd enjoyed it somewhat, despite its being a job Dara'd laid on you. And you're probably the only *ty'iga* with a degree from Berkeley."

"Yes, I enjoyed it—confused as I was over which of you was which. Those were the happiest days in my life, with you and Luke, back in school. For years I tried to learn your mothers' names so I'd know who I was supposed to be protecting. You were both so cagey, though."

Prince of Chaos

Trapped? This *Ty'iga*? No chance!

Nayda, or whatever it wants to call itself, is as free as it ever was. It's just that this particular body offers so many advantages.

Nearness to Luke, for example.

This particular *Ty'iga* is no slouch in the brains department. As Gail Lampron she held her own with her fellow students, Merlin Corey, Luke Reynard and Julia Barnes.

So far, so good. The *Ty'iga* has managed to find a host that gives her access to the Court of Amber (as daughter of the Begman Ambassador), is a close relative of the Amberites (as half-sister to Coral, the bearer of the Jewel of Judgement), and consort to the King of Kashfa (Luke). Not to mention her friendly relationship with Merlin, Ghostwheel, and even Corwin's Pattern. She'll want to keep these relationships up, and to cultivate more.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [25 Points]

STRENGTH = Amber Rank

ENDURANCE = Amber Rank

WARFARE = [25 Points]

POWERS

"Supposing I simply trump out of here to some distant shadow?"

"I will be obliged to follow you."

"In this form, or another?"

She looked away. She poked at her food.

"You've already admitted that you can be other persons. You located me in some arcane fashion, then you take possession of someone in my vicinity."

She took a drink of coffee.

"Perhaps something prevents you from saying it," I continued, "but that's the case. I know it."

She nodded once, curtly, and resumed eating.

Blood of Amber

Bodiless Spirit [50 Points] - The *Ty'iga* can depart the Nayda body at will, taking the form of a blue mist, and travelling at the speed of thought anywhere in Shadow. Once she has found what she seeks, the *Ty'iga* can take over another body, shrugging into it as if it were a new suit. Though she usually picks people, she's equally capable of taking over any kind of creature.

In addition, since a *Ty'iga* is basically a creature of energy, she is able to sense and manipulate most forms of magical and mystic energy. Travelling between Shadow, even while in a physical body, is simply a matter of following the magical intersections between each reality.

GAME MASTER TIPS FOR ROLE- PLAYING NAYDA

"You will not hurt my friends," Nayda said...

I wondered then at its slapping me down before I could use the spikard, and transporting us immediately to its stronghold. Did this mean I might actually have had a chance against it, out there in Logrus territory where it was weakened?

"Creature of the Pit," it told her, "such a doomed, pathetic gesture as yours verges on the heroic. I feel a certain fondness for you. Would that I had such a friend..."

Prince of Chaos

She's got guts, that *Ty'iga*.

The best proof of Nayda's sincere friendship, with Merlin and with Luke, is the way she stood up to the Primal Pattern.

She's got guts.

BILL ROTH

He was a short, heavy-set man with a somewhat florid complexion, his dark hair streaked with white and perhaps a bit thin on top.

Trumps of Doom

Bottom line, Bill Roth is one sharp guy.

He thinks fast, and on his feet, but he also does all his homework. Way back, when he visited the wounded Corwin in the Shadow Earth hospital, Bill Roth carried a full briefcase. He had all the paperwork, had done a complete investigation, and had even, in the middle of the previous night, walked around Corwin's house with a flashlight.

As any good lawyer knows, you don't ask a question unless you already have a pretty good idea of what the answer is going to be. And that means you do research.

Think, and research again.

Add to his legal career Bill Roth's lifelong interest in military history. The combination is just about the perfect prerequisite for a stay in the Court of Amber.

Recommended for all versions of Bill Roth.

Given Bill Roth's current importance in the Court of Amber, it seems likely that he's already been given a full deck of Trump. He's on friendly terms with Random, Fiona and Florimel, so those are the three he'd most likely contact whenever he wants passage back to Amber from Shadow Earth.

An item that might make life easier for Bill is an extra Trump. It could be a Trump of one of Bill's offices (either in upstate New York, or in Palm Beach). However, the most useful Trump would be one of Bill's Shadow Earth Secretary, Horace Kramer. Having a line to Horace would allow for easy travel back to Shadow Earth, but also for the occasional "conference call," so that Bill could continue overseeing the crown's interests on Shadow Earth without leaving Amber.



BILL ROTH—HIRED GUN TO THE COURT OF AMBER (HUMAN VERSION)

His name was Bill Roth, and he had been my father's friend as well as his attorney, back when he'd lived in this area. He was possibly the only man on Earth Dad had trusted, and I trusted him, too. I'd visited him a number of times during my eight years—most recently, unhappily, a year and a half earlier, at the time of his wife, Alice's, funeral. I had told him my father's story, as I had heard it from his own lips, outside the Courts of Chaos, because I'd gotten the impression that he had wanted Bill to know what had been going on, felt he'd owed him some sort of explanation for all the help he'd given him. And Bill seemed to understand and believe it. But then, he'd known Dad a lot better than I did.

Trumps of Doom

Though Bill is but a Shadow Human, he is highly intelligent, has advanced training in the law, and offers a outsider's perspective on Amber problems. All of which make him an invaluable aid to King Random and the Crown of Amber.

Current Objectives.

Bill Roth will be an avid student of Amber law, both as it applies to the royal household, and to diplomatic affairs. He's especially keen to expand his understanding of the law in the Courts of Chaos and may, if Merlin becomes king, offer to help in the new realm.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Human Rank

STRENGTH = Human Rank

ENDURANCE = Human Rank

WARFARE = Human Rank

Court Position—Legal Counsel

"...the other stuff I've done for Amber seems pretty sedate by comparison."

"Other stuff? You mean the Concord—the time Random sent Fiona with a copy of the Patternfall Treaty with Swayvil, King of Chaos, for her to translate and you to look at for loopholes?"

"That, yes," he said, "though I wound up studying your language myself before I was done."

Then Flora wanted her library recovered—no easy job—then an old flame traced—whether for reunion or revenge I never learned. Paid me in gold, though. Bought the place in Palm Beach with it. Then—Oh, hell. For a while there, I thought of adding 'Counsel to the Court of Amber' to my business card..."

Trumps of Doom

As the "hired help," Bill Roth gets an insider's view into Amber's family politics. In these matters, Corwin's description of the confusion over the royal succession, resolved by the Unicorn's selection of Random as king, could be just one of thousands of disputes.

For example, Merlin describes himself as "Duke of the Western Marches and Earl of Kolvir." But what's the source of those grants?

One possibility is that King Random, grateful for Merlin's services, and eager to provide Corwin's son with a solid position in Amber, made a royal decree. Which leads to the question of who had the titles (and presumably, lands, estates, revenues and retainers) before they were passed along to Merlin. Nobles, or even many generations of hereditary succession, may have been suddenly relieved of their titles, and now may be seeking legal recourse. Or there could be a massive shuffle, with titles passing outward in the Golden Circle ("Billy, Grandma gets your room, and you get Sally's room, and Sally goes to Jeffry's, and Jeffry gets to stay in the basement..."), resulting in countless legal disputes. This could involve not only the principal properties, but also all the servants, animals and furnishings ("Property of the Crown!?! That mantelpiece was installed by my great-grandmother after it was given to her by Prince Julian...").

Another possibility is that Merlin automatically received the titles, along with the lands, estates, revenues and retainers, simply by virtue of being Corwin's first born son (just as the eldest son of the British crown is automatically made "Prince of Wales"). However, since Corwin was missing from Amber for a couple of hundred years, and made a criminal-of-the-dungeon under Eric's reign, it's likely that the latest transfer would cause problems. After all, whose legal decree is the most valid? Oberon's? Eric's? Corwin's? Or Random's? And what compensation is due to those displaced by judgement of the crown?

Remember that Bill Roth also said, as would any good lawyer, "I don't want to have an opinion."

What he's saying, among other things, is that he has to be ready to take either side of a legal case. Considering that there has already been an Amber legal structure, along with judges, lawyers and clerks, Bill knows that he may, frequently, be taking sides *against* the crown. Should Princess Fiona, for example, have a dispute regarding her own inheritance, he wants to be ready to defend her against King Random.

BILL ROTH—AMBER'S LATEST RETAINER (ZERO POINT VERSION)

Bill Roth rose to his feet—more a touch of display than any formality, I realized immediately. I hadn't recognized him at first because he now sported the beginnings of a grizzled beard and a mustache. Also, he had on brown trousers with a silver stripe running down their outside seams, vanishing into a pair of high brown boots. His shirt was silver with brown piping, and a brown cloak lay folded upon the chair to his right. A wide black sword belt lay atop it and a sheathed blade of short-to-medium length was hung upon it.

"You've gone native. Also, you've lost some weight."

"True," he said, "and I'm thinking of retiring here. It agrees with me."

Blood of Amber

Given that the palace servants of Castle Amber seem to last for hundreds of years, it's not all that surprising that Bill Roth may be rejuvenated by a stay in Amber. Plus, of course, prolonged exposure to any beings of Pattern may give a mere Shadow Earth mortal like Bill Roth a measure of reality.

Bill has learned magic from Fiona and swordsmanship from Benedict. Give him another fifty years in Amber, and he might well pick up quite a few more tricks.

Current Objectives.

He'll want to stay in Amber indefinitely, learning all that he can, helping his Amber friends, and taking advantage of the reversal of the aging process. In time, he may want to bring in his children as well.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Chaos [+10 Points]

STRENGTH = Chaos [+10 Points]

ENDURANCE = Chaos [+10 Points]

WARFARE = Amber

POWERS

Power Words - [10 Points] - Thus far he has only learned Magic Negation and Psychic Defense. He's still deciding which other Power Words to add to his list.

Sorcery [15 Points] - Just as Merlin was able to apply his understanding of computers to spell-casting, so Bill Roth has used his lawyer's understanding of procedure to grasp some of the underlying principles of magic.

ALLIES

Family Friend in Amber [2 Points] - This would be his liege, King Random of Amber, to whom Bill serves as legal counsellor and advisor.

Family Friend in Chaos [2 Points] - Bill Roth has the unique position of being close to, and trusted by, the rulers of both the Courts of Chaos and Amber. Merlin will come to Bill's side if needed, and looks to him for advice and a sympathetic ear.

GOOD STUFF

[+1 Point]

BILL ROTH— A MASK OF SHADOW

Bill was a native of the area, had gone to school in Buffalo, come back, married, joined the family firm, and that was that. He had known me as a retired Army officer who sometimes travelled on vague business. We had both belonged to the country club, which was where I had met him. I had known him for more than a year without our exchanging more than a few words. Then one evening I happened to be next to him in the bar and it had somehow come out that he was hot on military history, particularly the Napoleonic Wars. The next thing we knew, they were closing the place up around us. We were close friends then, right up until the time of my difficulties.

Sign of the Unicorn

Fact is, Bill Roth's position, as trusted advisor to King Random of Amber, friend to Corwin and Merlin, is more important than the person of Bill Roth.

While it may be difficult to infiltrate by normal means, Oberon's disguise as Ganelon shows how one could take advantage of Bill Roth. If Bill Roth is someone else's disguise, he would seem to have merely human Attributes.

POSSIBLE IDENTITIES

Oberon. The old king has already displayed his talent for disguises. Perhaps Oberon took a page from Caine's book and faked his own death. Nowadays he's found exactly the right role, that of informal advisor to the new King Random.

After all, Bill learned Thari in record time, to the point where reading ancient records and legal papers was easy for him. He demonstrates a pretty complete knowledge of Amber's history, and genealogy, and the countries of the Golden Circle. Since moving to Amber, he's grown a beard and lost some weight, and learned the sword. He's pretty familiar with the city, and has even adopted colors of brown and silver (compare these to Oberon's green and gold).

Caine. Well, he did it once before, faking his own death. This time, however, he'll imitate Oberon, adopt a disguise, and hang around the Court of Amber where he can pick up all the latest gossip. Caine couldn't ask for a more ideal mask than that of Corwin's trusted friend Bill Roth.

Brand. Assume that Brand remains suspended

somehow. Unable to physically leave the Abyss, but with the psychic power to wander through Shadow. Lacking a physical body, he might possess the bodies of others as does a *Ty'iga*. And, given that this is true, Bill Roth's high position in Random's Court (combined with Bill's merely human resistance), would be irresistible.

Eric. Not only were the circumstances of his death somewhat questionable (why wasn't Fiona permitted to do an autopsy?), but Eric was very familiar with Shadow Earth, and with Corwin's life in that place. It's possible that Eric has been Bill Roth all along, certainly back to the point where the Jewel of Judgement saved Corwin by transporting him back to Shadow Earth. Now things have worked out quite nicely, and Eric finds himself in a very satisfactory situation, close to the throne, and beyond suspicion.

Current Objectives.

Regardless of who stands behind the Bill Roth mask, it seems likely that they'll be content to stay on the sidelines, advising Random in the duties of kingship and diplomacy. If Merlin takes the throne of the Courts of Chaos, then "Bill" may follow, becoming a trusted advisor in that place as well.

GAME MASTER TIPS FOR ROLE- PLAYING BILL ROTH

He shook his head. "Excuse me," he said. "I'm not used to being acquainted with legends."

"You don't believe me?"

"I shouldn't believe you, but I do believe you. That's the trouble." He was silent as we turned the corner and headed back toward the stair. Then he added, "It was that way whenever I was around your father, too."

*Merlin & Bill Roth,
in Sign of Chaos*

Friendly and helpful, Bill Roth is still, bottom line, a good lawyer. Given the shark-like politics of Castle Amber and the elder Amberites, he might find himself right at home. As an attorney, Bill has the ability to question people thoroughly, perhaps bringing forgotten information into the open, sometimes revealing inconsistencies in their stories. Bill is a good listener, and he asks excellent questions.

BILL ROTH AS FATHER, OR GRANDFATHER

Bill Roth as a father, or Grandfather (Bill Junior had twin sons shortly before one of Corwin's visits), represents a great opportunity for characters who lack powers (say, those who bid a little too high in the Attribute Auction...)

to come into an *Amber* campaign. Players can take the roles of Bill Roth's children (one of whom is named Bill, Junior), or his children's children (perhaps a rebel teenager who runs off to Grandad) who are introduced to Amber by Bill.

CHILDREN FROM SHADOW EARTH

Imagine your surprise when Bill picks you up from your college graduation, then drives into a deserted field and starts staring at a deck of cards. A moment later, you and he are in a medieval city, or in a crazy place where a pinwheel sky revolves over an island of floating rock. This is a great way to introduce a Shadow Human into the Amber world, and is especially valuable for those players who might not know anything about the *Chronicles of Amber*.

FATHER OF AN AMBERITE

Bill Roth has had plenty of contact with both Fiona and Florimel, either of whom might have decided to "console" the grieving widower. While a marriage seems unlikely, an Amberite child of Bill Roth would make for a great "Good Stuff" player character.

STARTING OVER IN AMBER:

Bill was approaching retirement age on Shadow Earth, but in Amber the magic of the place has restored him. He's lost weight, put on some muscle tone, and has even begun to learn how to fight. He speaks Thari like a native, and is considering retiring in Amber on a full-time basis. Another marriage isn't out of the question, and might even be encouraged by matchmakers like Llewella or Flora, who might set him up with an appropriate human from the city Amber, daughter of a noble family. A marriage like that would give her both family status and connect Bill more closely to the land. A child would grow up knowing Amber well, but holding the elders in a bit of awe.

BILL ROTH AS A PLAYER IN THE GAMES OF THE COURT OF AMBER

"Usually—from everything I've been able to find in the archives—Amber avoids getting involved in touchy situations like this between allies. Oberon seldom went looking for trouble. But Random seems to be in a hurry, and he let this guy drive a hard bargain."

"He's overreacting," I said, "not that I blame him. He remembers Brand too well."

Bill nodded.

"I'm just the hired help," he said. "I don't want to have an opinion."

Sign of Chaos

Bill's allegiance is to his friends in Amber. He will not compromise that in any great way, though he is known to let information slip to concerned family members. As Counsel, he is aware that his position is as an advisor and an assistant, not as a surrogate ruler, and he will act according to the King's wishes, and never against them. If torn between duty and friendship, he will try to find the most agreeable solution which results in no commands being broken or secrets told.

Constant Allies & Enemies:

I shook his hand.

"By the way," he said, "you did agree to answer a question."

"I did, didn't I? What is it?"

"Are you human?" he asked, still gripping my hand, no special expression on his face.

I started in on a grin, then threw it away.

"I don't know. I—I like to think so. But I don't really—Of course I am! That's a silly... Oh hell! You really mean it, don't you? And I said I'd be honest..." I chewed my lip and thought for a moment. Then, "I don't think so," I said.

"Neither do I," he said, and he smiled. "It doesn't make any real difference to me, but I thought it might to you—to know that someone knows you are different and doesn't care."

*Bill Roth & Corwin,
in Sign of the Unicorn*

To grip the hand of an Amberite, someone as foreign and as dangerous as Corwin, and to confront him like this... Well, Bill Roth has guts. He's also proved to Corwin, more than once, that he is a true friend. Given Corwin's track record, that means that anyone threatening Bill Roth is doing nothing less than dancing with death.

As counsel to Amber, Bill Roth is friendly with all the elder Amberites. Thus far it seems that Bill has gathered no enemies.

SAND

by Cathy Klessig & Erick Wujcik

"Okay. The lady," he stated, "is Sand."

I stared so hard that I felt the beginnings of a contact. I smothered it.

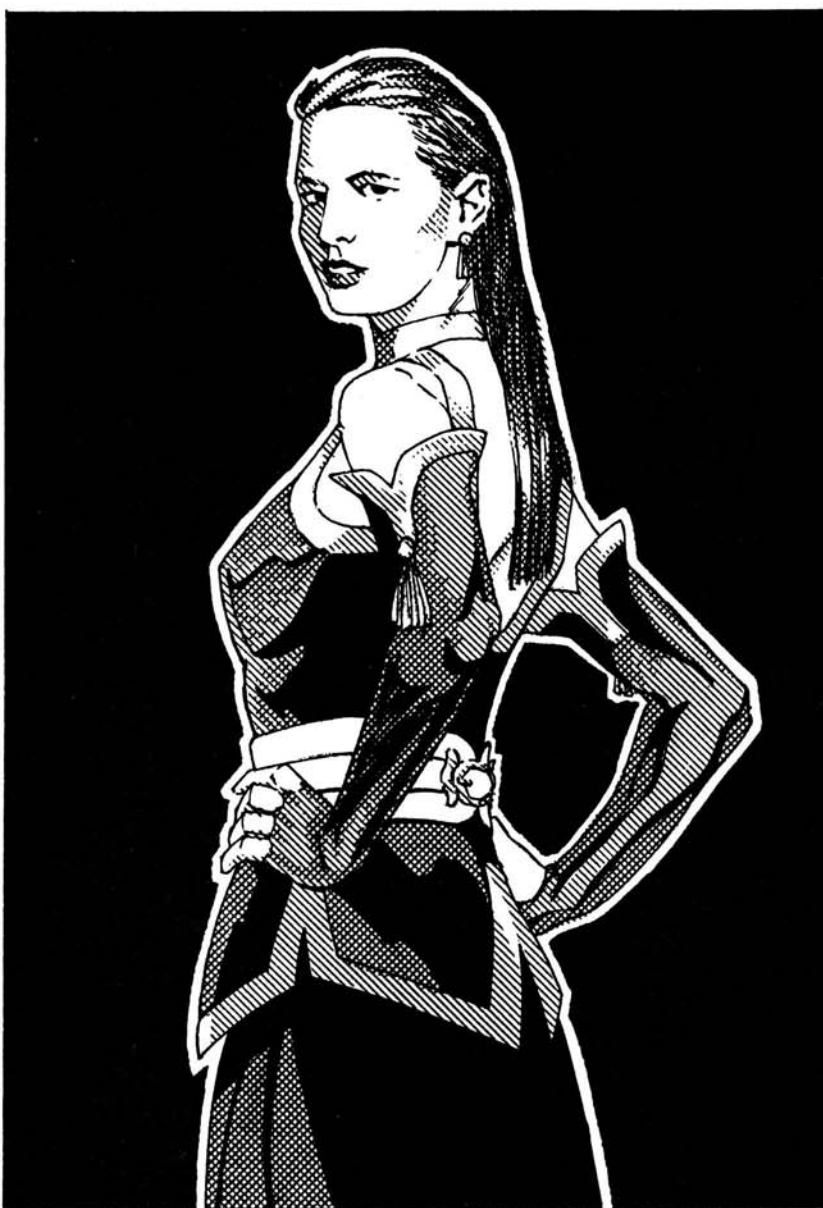
"The long-lost," he added.

Blood of Amber

The surprise is that Merlin felt any contact at all.

Sand is the daughter of Oberon and Harla, who was Queen in Amber for a time. She has a brother named Delwin. Rumor has it that she and her brother departed from Amber for their mother's homeland two hundred years ago.

Others in the family assume that Sand is working with Delwin, perhaps because they've heard that two "guardians" watch over the Spikards.



SAND—

QUEEN OF CORILAINE

(200 POINT VERSION)

Devoting herself to the welfare of her mother's homeland, Sand has become its Queen and Lady Protector.

In fact, one of the primary reasons for Sand's departure from Amber is her dissatisfaction with "Oberon's policies toward her homeland."

Oberon's policies?

What could Harla's land have that would interest Oberon enough for him to meddle? Or perhaps Oberon made promises toward Harla's home, commitments that he didn't keep.

Now that Oberon is gone, Sand might be willing to open up relations with Amber. But not until the current crisis, with all the turmoil between the Pattern and the Logrus, has passed.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [5 Points]

STRENGTH = [20 Points]

ENDURANCE = [25 Points]

WARFARE = [60 Points]

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

Power Words [10 Points] - Defensive Luck, Magic Negation, Resume True Form, Trump Negation, and Weaken Structure.

ARTIFACTS AND CREATURES

Sand's Spear [4 Points] - An oaken spear, with a head of gold which has been magically hardened. On command, the spearhead glows with a bright, golden light.

- **Deadly Damage** [4 Points]

Sand's Armor [2 Points] - Steel armor, decorated with gold inlaid in a leaf pattern.

- **Resistant to Firearms** [2 Points]

The Night Wolves [21 Points] - The only approach to Corilaine leads through a dark and tangled forest, where it is always night. Here, packs of black wolves roam at will, contesting the passage of any unauthorized person. Sand generally has one or two of these wolves about her, especially on those rare occasions when she travels.

- **Horde Quantity** [*3 Points]

- **Combat Mastery** [4 Points]

- **Double Damage** [2 Points]

- **Psychic Resistance** [1 Point]

PERSONAL SHADOWS & WAYS

Shadow Corilaine [3 Points] - A pastoral place, rather Arthurian in tone, running to rich, green farmlands and mysterious, tangled forests. The faerie folk dance on the hills in the moonlight; the human folk tend their fields and forges, and ride out to deal with the occasional dragon, robber baron, or rogue wizard. Sand reigns in her castle of Tilaine, and the people revere her as a legendary lawgiver.

- **Realm of Abyss** [2 Points]

- **Communication Barriers** [1 Point]

SAND— MISTRESS OF DREAMS (250 POINT VERSION)

All Merlin's mysterious dreams convey messages.

Exactly the kind of message that Sand would want to impart. Likewise, by observing Merlin's dreams, Sand is keeping up with some important twists in upcoming events.

Sand has made a special study of dreams, and dream magic. She is adept at entering the dreams of those she desires to study or influence.

It's a handy way of keeping track of what's going on in Amber, and establishing long-term links with all sorts of people. She has also evolved special spells which are used in conjunction with her Moonstone Pendant.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [80 Points]

STRENGTH = [15 Points]

ENDURANCE = [15 Points]

WARFARE = Amber Rank

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

Dream Trump Artistry [70 Points] - Sand can enter a person's dreams through their Trump. Once she has contact with a sleeping mind, she can direct the dream however she likes. This allows her to issue premonitions, and to learn as she sees the way others react. By contacting a second card, Sand can impose another character's Trump image into the dream, in some cases making it possible for two people to share the same dream.

Sorcery [15 Points]

ARTIFACTS & CREATURES OF POWER

Moonstone Pendant [5 Points] - Sand uses this device to store spells. Usually it contains Mind Touch, Quell, Cardiac Arrest, Stone Binding, Invisibility, and a modified form of Defensive Psyche Ward that can be cast on a Trump. It is also possible to cast the spells through a Trump contact, and even into a person's dreams.

- **Alternate Form** [1 Point] - Insubstantial
- **Rack & Use Spells** [4 Points]
- **Contains Trump Image** [1 Point]

SAND—DELWIN'S FOE (300 POINT VERSION)

Given the way things usually work in Amber, there's about a fifty-fifty chance that Sand and Delwin are actually at each other's throats.

Perhaps they're locked in battle for control of the Spikards, one of those winner-take-all kinds of things, where one will emerge controlling the touchstones of the universe, and the other will end up in perpetual psychic slavery...

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [110 Points]

STRENGTH = Amber

ENDURANCE = [10 Points]

WARFARE = Amber

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

Advanced Trump Artistry [65 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

Complex Construct Conjunction [50 Points] - Sand is attempting to mold the Spikards into her own personal tools. The only thing standing in her way is Delwin, and for each Spikard that is set loose near the Pattern or the Logrus, the greater chance Sand will have of prevailing.

SAND AS MOTHER

Gone for at least two hundred years, there's been plenty of time for Sand to have raised a child. Plus, there's another advantage to having Sand as a mother for a player character. If a player comes to the Game Master with a carefully worked out background, complete with a detailed Shadow that doesn't otherwise fit into the campaign, it's possible to retrofit things so that the player's Shadow becomes Sand's Shadow.

SUHUY

...A large, stooped, grey and red demonic form, horned and half-scaled, regarded me with elliptically pupiled eyes. Its fangs were bared in a smile.

"Uncle," I cried as I dismounted. "Greetings!"
Prince of Chaos

Like any good sage Suhuy speaks in riddles, explains with allusions (and illusions), and answers questions with more questions.

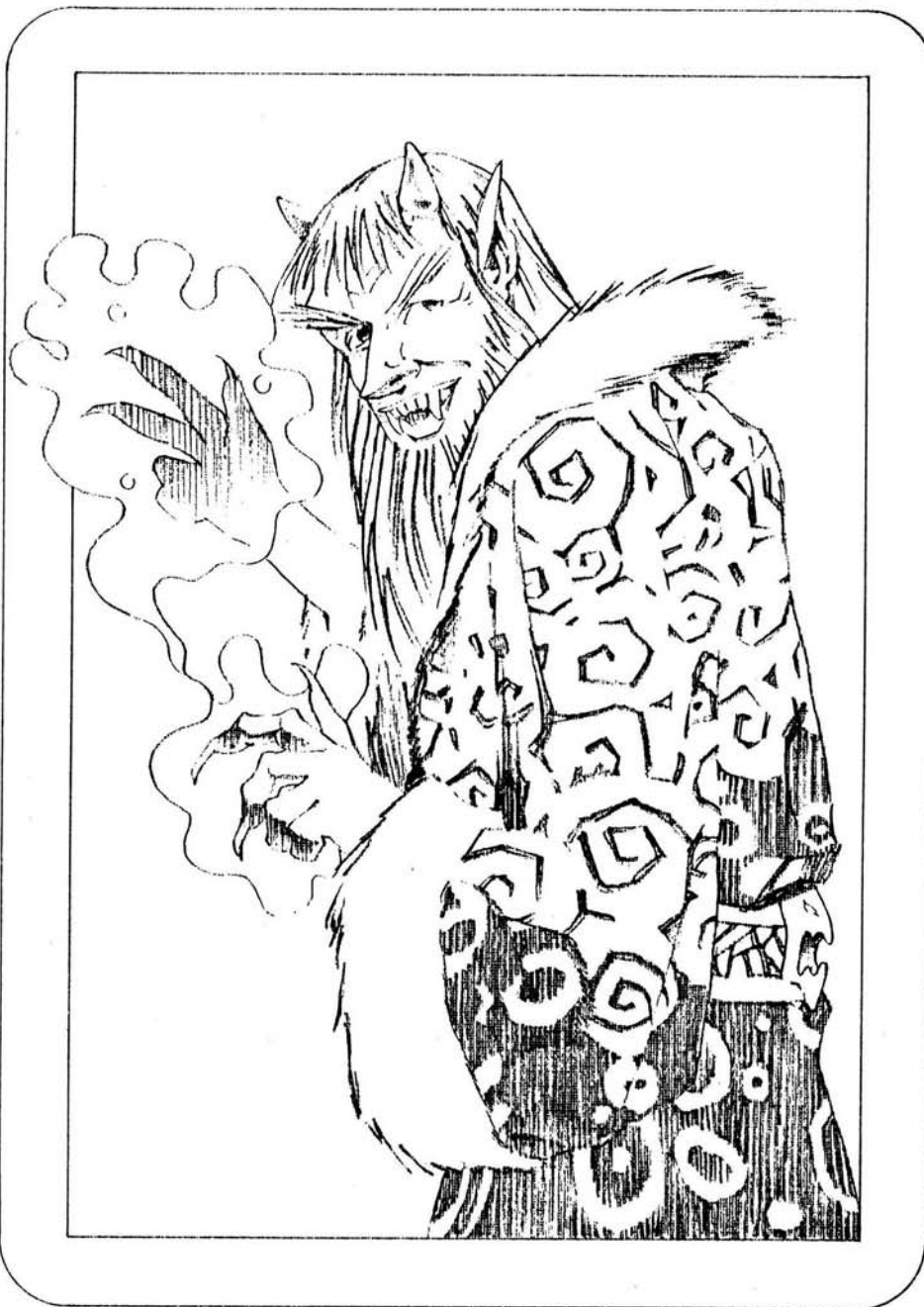
When asked for hard information, he responds by pointing Merlin to a scrying pool filled with ambiguous images, then by answering in riddles, and finally by casting a spell that gives Merlin's dreams symbolic and predictive meanings. None of which is particularly clear.

In other words, Suhuy can be pretty irritating. Especially when a poor aspiring Lordling of Chaos is just trying to get a straight answer.

It's not really Suhuy's fault that he can't do that. When you see countless versions of reality, constantly warped and contorted by the ever-changing image of the Logrus, it's hard to fix on just one explanation to any given problem. Even worse, since each slight variation on an action has uncountable numbers of both positive and negative consequences...

On the other hand, Suhuy comes across as a pretty friendly guy. He actually seems to like teaching the youngsters of the Courts of Chaos, and he's eager to be a proper host whenever he has visitors.

All of which is sort of chilling when you consider that this is the guy who spends most of his time consorting with the Logrus itself, the main force of destruction, chaos and madness in the universe.



SUHUY—CHAOS COACH

(400 POINT VERSION)

...Perhaps the skeletons of failures that Suhuy keeps around had troubled him...

Blood of Amber

Just as Shadow is created by the interplay between the forces of Logrus and Pattern, so magic everywhere is ultimately a side-effect of the influence of the Logrus. Which means that Suhuy's practiced hand can always and anywhere be able to weave together power words, spells, or even conjurations, without pause or even much in the way of reflection.

Wise in the ways of magic and power, Suhuy is always looking to pass along his knowledge and experience. He feels he serves the Courts of Chaos and the Logrus best by providing strong new defenders. As much as possible he will discourage his students from taking on too much, or reaching too far. Still, if a few young ones die, that is the price he will pay so that the others live on.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [75 Points]

STRENGTH = [5 Points]

ENDURANCE = Amber Rank

WARFARE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

POWERS

Advanced Logrus Mastery [70 Points]

Advanced Shape Shifting [65 Points]

Advanced Trump Artistry [60 Points]

Exalted Power Words [25 Points] - Suhuy knows all the standard Power Words, and can instantly absorb any others that he chances to overhear. It only takes him about a week to create an entirely new Power Word, should he happen to think of one that might be useful.

Exalted Sorcery [50 Points] - It's not so much that Suhuy can compose any imaginable spell, because any competent sorcerer can manage that. No, the difference is that Suhuy can weave his spells in a matter of minutes, with near total efficiency. He can also base his spells on any source of power or energy, regardless of where he might be in Shadow.

Exalted Conjuration [60 Points] - Suhuy's Conjurations are as real as anything shaped by the Logrus itself. So, for example, he can summon forth a creature, imbue it with qualities and powers, and make it as real as if it were born of a Lord of Chaos. Suhuy has also mastered the art of creating entire Shadows and Ways through the force of Conjuration.

PERSONAL SHADOWS AND WAYS

And so I slept, surrounded by tapestries and heavy drapes, in a doorless chamber in the Ways of Suhuy. It might have been in a tower, as I could hear the winds passing beyond the walls...

Prince of Chaos

The Ways of Suhuy [Zero Points] - Although called the Ways of Suhuy, this is really the Ways of the Logrus itself. Deep inside is the cavern containing the symbol of disorder, concealed by a maze so complex that each Lord of Chaos knows a different route to the interior. From the Ways of Suhuy it's possible to walk directly out into the Shadow beyond the Courts of Chaos, and also directly into the Ways of Sawall.

SUHUY— LUNATIC IN WAITING (500 POINT VERSION)

"...And your Uncle Suhuy—he seems eminently stable, but he reminds me a lot of Dworkin. Might he be sitting on all sorts of internal turmoils and ready to flip out anytime?"

"I hope not," I said. "He never has."

"Oh-oh, it's been building, and this is a time of stress."

*Ghostwheel & Merlin,
in Prince of Chaos*

Since merely assaying the Logrus is enough to drive a Lord of Chaos insane, even if only for a short time, what must the continual exposure be doing to Suhuy?

By now he must be completely nuts.

The only reason it hasn't been noticed is because Suhuy is one of those crazy people who can seem completely sane.

Suhuy seems to have mastered the trick of speaking and acting in an absolutely normal fashion. Few suspect that he has gone completely crackers, and those who know this secret take pains to keep it from becoming public.

As Ghostwheel pointed out, it's only a matter of time before the strain of containing Suhuy's madness will overcome his increasingly frail self.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [120 Points]

STRENGTH = [31 Points]

ENDURANCE = [60 Points]

WARFARE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

POWERS

Exalted Logrus Mastery [100 Points] - Suhuy knows, right down to his bones, that the Logrus is a warping of all the rules of rationality. Only by sticking to his personal vision of the world can Suhuy stop the destructive Chaos from instantly distorting reality. In practice, Suhuy can see through, and manipulate, all the tendrils of the Logrus, and can see into the minds of anyone who has the Logrus brought to mind.

Advanced Shape Shifting [65 Points]

Advanced Trump Artistry [60 Points]

Power Words [25 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

Conjuration [20 Points]

PERSONAL SHADOWS AND WAYS

...I followed him, still bearing my flagon, and we seated ourselves beside a still, green pool beneath a rocky overhang, umber sky above. His castle contained places from all over Chaos and Shadow, stitched together into a crazy-quilt pattern of ways within ways...

Prince of Chaos

Castle Suhuy [14 Points] - Surrounding the cavern of the Logrus, Suhuy has constructed separate By-Ways. Each is designed to accommodate Suhuy's various moods, so that the reality he sees around him seems "normal."

• **Named & Numbered Ways [*2 Points]**

• **Primal Plane [4 Points]**

• **Control over Time [2 Points]**

• **Communication Barriers [1 Point]**

SUHUY—LOGRUS SELF (600 POINT VERSION)

His hair is white, he is somewhat stooped and there are days when he carries a staff. This was one of them. He had on his yellow caftan, which I had always thought of as a working garment rather than a social one.

Blood of Amber

As Dworkin, creator of Pattern, is the embodiment of Pattern, so Suhuy has become yet another aspect of the Logrus. The difference is, whereas the Primal Pattern is stable, with but a single aspect, and a single personality, the Logrus is anything but singular. Ever mutating, there are no limits to how many guises the Logrus could wear. In fact, each and every initiate of the Logrus becomes another of the many faces of the Logrus.

The closer one becomes, the stronger the Logrus image that one can bear, the more one becomes like the raw essence of chaos.

Which makes Suhuy the closest thing to a living Logrus that can possibly exist.

Not that he has been necessarily warped by this experience. Just as Suhuy has become the Logrus, so the Logrus has become Suhuy. Their two personalities aren't identical, but they are complementary.

So, for example, where the Logrus continuously vies with the Pattern for supreme dominance of the universe, Suhuy is capable of seeing the larger picture, and the advantage of a balancing of the powers. Unlike the Logrus, Suhuy is more subtle in his manipulations, simply guiding his many students toward his long-term aims.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [100 Points]

STRENGTH = [35 Points]

ENDURANCE = [60 Points]

WARFARE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

POWERS

Allegorical Logrus Mastery [150 Points] - Not only does Suhuy know, and control, all the aspects of the Logrus in Merlin's version of the Courts of Chaos, but he is also, simultaneously, in touch with every other version of reality where the Logrus exists.

Look at it this way. While each Pattern is stable, and therefore unique, Logrus is, by definition, change. So every "version" of the Logrus is still the same Logrus. In the same way, Suhuy now exists in every alternate version of the Amber Universe, in every version of the Courts of Chaos.

Advanced Shape Shifting [65 Points]

Advanced Trump Artistry [60 Points]

Exalted Sorcery [50 Points] - As above.

Conjuration [20 Points]

PERSONAL SHADOWS AND WAYS

"As one of the three, you're under black watch. That's why I summoned you here, to one of my places of solitude."

Prince of Chaos

Suhuyways [70 Points] - Composed by Suhuy, as a housing for the Logrus itself, around which it is wrapped. The Ways of Suhuy also have strong links to the Ways of Sawall.

- **Environmental Quantity [*5 Points]** - Suhuyways exists in every place where the Primal Logrus manifests itself.

- **Primal Plane [4 Points]**

- **Control over Providence [8 Points]** - Suhuy exercises such control that both the past and future have already been measured and mandated.

- **Access Barriers [2 Points]**

GAME MASTER TIPS FOR ROLE-PLAYING SUHUY

"Uncle, you were often given to cryptic utterances when you were my teacher," I said. "But I've graduated now, and I guess that gives me the right to say I don't know what the hell you're talking about."

He chuckled and sipped his beer.

Prince of Chaos

Once a teacher, always a teacher. Suhuy finds it impossible to drop his professorial habit.

Not that Suhuy is a lecturer. No, he prefers to set up problems, letting his students find their own knowledge, and helping only when absolutely necessary, and only with the minimum amount of clues and hints.

For example, Suhuy cast upon Merlin, "...A small spell... to open your mind to some enlightenment," explaining, "I hoped to lead you to answers from within, rather than burden you with my guesswork and suspicions." The result didn't show up until Merlin fell asleep, at which point he dreamt of visiting Amber's Corridor of Mirrors. The same spell, cast on another character, would result in an entirely different dreamscape, probably based on the character's own experience.

SUHUY AS FATHER

"You went off into Shadow to a fine university," he said, "and you have dwelled in the Court of Amber, which I would deem highly educational. Therefore, I bid you take thought. Surely, a mind so well-honed—"

Suhuy, in Prince of Chaos

As a father, Suhuy would be most interested in assuring his children of a good education. That done, he'd most likely take a "hands off" approach, and let his kids find their own way in the wide world.

SUHUY AS A PLAYER IN THE GAMES OF THE COURTS OF CHAOS

He showed me row upon row of worn but still nasty fangs.

Prince of Chaos

Suhuy seems to have outlived any ambition he might have had for mere political power. Still, no one with his influence and power could be ignored by a scheming aristocracy. And, since the Lords of Chaos can't overlook Suhuy, so Suhuy can't disregard the great game. He must play, if only to avoid being someone else's pawn.

Not one to actively take part, Suhuy will be most interested in gathering information, and with supplying aid and resources to those who best serve his own interests.

Constant Allies & Enemies:

Given Suhuy's intimate relationship with the Logrus, it would seem that how he interacts with any lesser beings is unimportant. Still, Suhuy does seem to have a fondness for Merlin, and may also be attached to a few other favorite students. It seems unlikely that anyone would publicly acknowledge an enmity with Suhuy.



VIALLE

Vialle is only a little over five feet tall and quite slim. Brunette, fine-featured, very soft-spoken. She was wearing red. Her sightless eyes looked through me, reminding me of darkness past, of pain.

The Hand of Oberon

Consider her origins.

She seems to have had prospects so dismal that only a marriage, however brief, to a Prince of Amber, would make her "a great lady." So a marriage was imposed upon her, not to some Rebman Court favorite, but to someone

Queen Moire despised. Vialle was married off to Random, who had a recent reputation as a destroyer of women, and as one who had abandoned his own child. Vialle's marriage was simply part of a year-long prison sentence.

"Great joke," said Random.

If there are any miracles in Amber, then this is one. Random came to love Vialle, and she him. Random came to the throne of Amber, and Vialle, so low-ranked in Rebma, became Queen.

Vialle is still full of surprises. She displays insight, depths of knowledge, and quirky abilities each time she shows herself. Random says, "Vialle is very skilled in certain areas of medicine," and it's most interesting that Vialle would physically stand between Random, a highly capable elder Amberite, and a potential threat. One would expect her to be a victim, but she is always the protector, the rescuer, possibly even the savior of Random. Perhaps of Amber itself.

That last because Vialle is no passive Queen. She readily commands troops, dispenses justice, or mercy, and is, in most things, second only to the King. Given the sheer might and egotism of the King's siblings, it's hard to imagine a more forceful demonstration of true power.

"Men will die," she said.

"That's the way it is in war. Sometimes you have no choice."

"But we do have a choice, of sorts," she said, "one that I don't understand. And I do want to understand it before I give an order that will result in numerous deaths."

*Vialle & Merlin,
in Sign of Chaos*



VIALLE— QUEEN OF AMBER

(50 POINT VERSION)

...I followed her out and around the corner to a small sitting room, where she left me with Vialle, who was seated in an uncomfortable-looking high-backed chair of dark wood and leather, held together with cast iron studs.

Sign of Chaos

The primary, supreme duty of a Queen is to enlarge her realm. Only through continuous expansion, whether by arms or by more subtle means, may a domain assure its sovereignty. As Vialle is Queen by marriage, then it also falls upon her to enlarge her husband, to make him great in the eyes of his subjects, and to make him feared by his enemies.

While Random may bemoan the bureaucratic duties and ceremonial pomp of his office, there are no such complaints from Vialle. She knows her job and she does it exceptionally well. And woe be the fate of those who stand in her way, in the way of her husband, or in the way of her land. Occasionally, as was the case with Luke, she will show mercy—but only when it serves her larger view.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [100 Points]

STRENGTH = Human Rank [+25 Points]

ENDURANCE = Human Rank [+25 Points]

WARFARE = Human Rank [+25 Points]

ARTIFACTS & CREATURES

She removed a ring she wore upon her right forefinger. The band was of gold, the stone a milky green; the prongs of its setting caught it in a fashion to suggest some mantic spider guarding dreamland treasures against the daybreak world.

Sign of Chaos

Vialle's Ring [10 Points] - Given to her by Random, just prior to his departure at the climax of the Patternfall War, the ring was designed as a means of locating its wearer in Shadow, even in the midst of Shadow Storms, or a wave of Chaos. It creates pathways through Shadow, allowing Random to locate it, wherever it might be, within hours.

- Impenetrable Psychic Barrier [8 Points]
- Create Shadow Path [2 Points]

"Vialle, I'm borrowing your studio for a few moments," he said.

"Surely," she replied.

He led me inside and closed the door behind us. Across the room a bust of Gérard had fallen and broken. What appeared to be her current project—a multilimbed sea creature of a sort I'd never seen—occupied a work area at the studio's far end.

Knight of Shadows

Vialle's Clay-Stone [10 Points] - This special material, part clay and part living matter, is used by Vialle to create special pieces of sculpture. Each piece, once shaped into a form, acquires a bit of the psychic impression of the subject. So, for example, the bust of Gérard will resonate with Gérard's thoughts and emotions. Mixed with different elements, and fired in a kiln, the resulting sculpture can appear as varying types of stone or even metal.

- Extraordinary Psychic Sensitivity [4 Points]
- Alternate Form [1 Point]
- Named & Numbered [*2 Points]

GOOD STUFF

[5 Points]

VIALLE—QUEEN OF AMBER, AND TRUMP.

"Then let's be about this," she said, raising her left hand, which I saw to contain a Trump. "Come over here, please."

Luke approached her and I followed him. I could see then that it was Julian's Trump that she held.

"Place your hand upon my shoulder," she told him.

"All right."

He did, and she reached, found Julian and began speaking to him...

Vialle & Luke, in Sign of Chaos

So Vialle, even though she is totally blind, can use Trump.

Or can she?

Notice that she had Luke put his hand on her shoulder before she initiated the Trump contact.

What if Vialle, being blind, must use someone else's eyes to see the Trump? Then, when Luke touches her, she sees through Luke, and can therefore make use of the Trump. Given that this is the case, it would be an easy matter for the Queen to arrange to have certain servants nearby, those with the necessary Psyche, at all times. Of course, receiving a Trump call wouldn't require sight.

VIALLE—

SEER WITHOUT SIGHT

(100 POINT VERSION)

I raised my pad and opened it to the appropriate page, hoping it was a good time to make the call. I regarded the lady's delicate features, her unfocussed gaze that somehow indicated the breadth and depth of her vision. After a few moments, the page grew cold beneath my fingertips, and my drawing took on a 3-dimensional quality, seemed faintly to stir.

"Yes?" came her voice.

"Your Highness." I said. "However you may perceive these things, I want you to know that I have intentionally altered my appearance. I was hoping that—"

"Luke," she said, "of course I recognize you—your own Majesty now," her gaze still unfocussed. "You are troubled."

"The Salesman's Tale"

Sensing the undercurrent of emotion, Vialle knows herself to be far more perceptive than those around her. It's not that she has a higher Psyche (though she's no slouch in that department), it's more a matter of aptitude. Vialle has the patience to listen, to observe, and to open up her senses to the most subtle shadings of nuance and inkling.

Immersed in her deep study, she'll likely refuse offers to give her sight (surely it is within the purview of a King of Amber to offer the gift of vision to the blind?). She wants no distractions, and she'll continue to perceive where others merely see.

"...She said she'd tell me about it after the operation Dworkin's doing now, in case he needs her empathic abilities..."

*Random, speaking of Vialle,
in Knight of Shadows*

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [100 Points]

STRENGTH = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

ENDURANCE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

WARFARE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

POWERS

I got to my feet and followed her to a table in the corner. She took off her dusty apron and hung it on a peg on the wall. As she prepared the tea I regarded the small army of statues which lined one wall and bivouacked in random cluster about the enormous room—large, small, realistic, impressionistic, beautiful, grotesque. She worked mainly in clay, though a few smaller ones were of stone; and there were furnaces at the room's far end, though these were cold now. Several metal mobiles of unusual shape were suspended from ceiling beams.

"The Salesman's Tale"

Earth Magic [20 Points] - Vialle's own form of Sorcery, or Conjunction, or perhaps something else. Vialle crafts sculptures, giving them some of her own special Psychic insight or power.

Once made, whether in the image of a person, or something more abstract, Vialle can use the sculpture as a focus for her own sensations. More complex "conversations" are possible when she arranges two or more of the sculptures together, usually in a circle, and then calls upon the spirits of the past, or of the future.

There are no spells, as such, in Earth Magic, since the thrust of the art is in the creation of magical pieces. However, Vialle can impose her will upon her sculptures, commanding them to be sensitive to different sensations, personalities, or even forces.

ARTIFACTS & CREATURES

Vialle's Mobiles [10 Points] - These are the "voices" through which her sculptures can speak, sensitive to thought, and capable of simulating speech by their movement through the air. Usually hung from a ceiling, or scaffolding, they are works of art as well as artifacts of magic, each beautiful and evocative.

- **Able to Speak [1 Point]**
- **Extraordinary Psychic Sensitivity [4 Points]**
- **Named & Numbered [*2 Points]**

VIALLE—SEER WITHOUT SIGHT, AND THE TRUMP.

She rose and moved to a small chest of drawers. Opening one, she withdrew a boxed set of cards. Slowly, she counted down from the top of the deck and removed one.

Vialle, "The Salesman's Tale"

To Vialle, a Trump is a lens that allows her to focus her sensations more intensely, or at a distance. She is quite capable of using Trump, simply by concentrating on the psychic image of the image. It may also be that Vialle has learned Caine's trick of lightly touching a number of cards, to monitor their activity and, occasionally, seeing into the thoughts of their subjects.

Vialle must be careful, however, to keep track of exactly which Trump is which. Should the power of a Trump fade, to the extent that it can no longer be "sensed," she can't use the visual cue available to the other Amberites to "charge up" the card. For this reason Vialle always keeps her Trump deck in careful order, and she keeps a mental list of the sequence of the cards.

VIALLE— TRUMP SCULPTRESS (150 POINT VERSION)

...I noticed that Random seemed engaged in an intense Trump communication. Vialle stood nearby, as if shielding him from the opening in the wall and whatever might emerge therefrom...

Knight of Shadows

Perhaps we have it all wrong.

What if Vialle really were the stronger partner in her marriage? Not physically, but in terms of her attunement with the Power of Trump.

Working diligently in her studio, Vialle has created a large number of potent Trump artifacts in the form of sculptures. With the assistance of these objects, Vialle is capable of sending her uncanny senses throughout Shadow, to the presence of any of the elder Amberites, and to countless others as well. In addition, the sculptures themselves may perform continuously, constantly gathering information, and granting the sightless Queen a most thorough panorama of unfolding events.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [100 Points]

STRENGTH = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

ENDURANCE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

WARFARE = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]

POWERS

"A few small things I have heard, known, guessed at, and perhaps dreamed—and a few, I suppose, I simply fear. Hardly a coherent shape. Yet enough, perhaps, to query the powers of the earth I work with. Yes. Now that I have thought it I must try it, of course. At a time such as this."

She rose slowly, paused, and gestured high.

"That shall be the Tongue," she said, and a draft stirred one of the mobiles causing it to produce many tones.

She crossed the studio to the righthand wall—small figure in gray and green, chestnut hair down to the middle of her back—and ran her fingers lightly over the sculpted figure that stood there. Finally, selecting a broad-faced statue with a narrow torso, she began pushing it toward the center of the room.

I was on my feet and moving in an instant.

"Let me do that for you, Your Highness."

She shook her head.

"Call me Vialle," she said. "And no, I must position them myself. This one is named Memory."

"She placed it below and somewhat to the northwest of the Tongue. Then she moved to a knot of figures and selected a thin one with slightly parted lips which she placed to the south on Tongue's compass.

"...And this is Desire," she stated.

Quickly locating a third—a tall, squinting figure—she placed it to the northeast.

"Caution," she went on.

A lady, her right hand boldly extended, went to the west.

"Risk," she continued.

To the east she positioned another lady, both arms spread wide.

"Heart," she said.

To the southwest went a high-domed, shaggy-browed philosopher. "Head," she said.

...And to the southeast a smiling lady—impossible to say whether her hand was raised in greeting or to deliver a blow.

"Chance," she finished, fitting her into the circle which had come to remind me both of Stonehenge and of Easter Island.

"Bring two chairs," she said, "and place them here and here."

She indicated positions to the north and south of her circle.

I did as she'd said, and she seated herself in the northern-most chair, behind a final figure she had placed: Foresight. I took my place back of Desire.

"Be silent now," she instructed...

"The Salesman's Tale"

Trump Sculpture [50 Points] - Not quite the same as Trump Artistry. Trump cards are evocative of each Amberites' outward self, not only the image that comes to eye, but also the public voice. When Vialle molds a bust of an Amberite, it doesn't correspond to the same level of the subject. She senses something different, something more in tune with the character's secret self, with the inner voice.

Vialle's power differs from the more usual Trump Artistry in Scrying. Where users of the cards simply lay out a spread and attempt to interpret its meaning, Vialle can arrange her "pieces," assigning each of them a position, and then ask them questions. Even though the answers may be ambiguous (as in the example above), the method has its advantages.

Power Words [10 Points] - Psychic Disrupt, Lifeforce,

Burst of Magic, Burst of Psyche, and (Special!) Share Senses. This last Power Word temporarily links the target's sensations with Vialle's own. This means Vialle will get a quick look at the mental state of her subject of the Power Word, but also that the subject will be blind, and likely disoriented, for a moment.

Conjuration [20 Points] - Vialle has the sculptures and mobiles described in her earlier version, but created with a fusion of Conjuration and her Trump Power.

VIALLE—TRUMP SCULPTRESS, AND THE TRUMP.

He produced a card and set about the business. And I found myself wondering, not for the first time, just what it was that Vialle sensed when it came to a Trump contact. I always see the other person myself, and all of the others say that they do, too. But Vialle, as I understood it, had been blind from birth. I've always felt it would be impolite to ask her, and for that matter it's occurred to me that her answer probably wouldn't make much sense to a sighted person. I'll probably always wonder, though.

Sign of Chaos

At Vialle's level of attunement to the Trump, she is quite capable of manipulating Trump cards by the feel of their power alone.

Her level of attunement allows her to identify a caller before accepting a contact. She can also sense the Trump quality of most people, places or objects, as can most Trump Artists. Beyond that, Vialle can even sense the Trump quality of abstract forces or feelings. Advanced tricks such as Trump Spying and Trump Blocking are probably pretty easy for Vialle.

GAME MASTER TIPS FOR ROLE-PLAYING VIALLE

"Give me your right hand," I said.

She extended her right hand and I raised it to my lips.

"Thank you," I said. "It was a good lunch."

I turned and made my way to the door. When I looked back, she had blushed and was smiling, her hand still partly raised, and I began to understand the change in Random.

"Good luck to you," she said the moment my footsteps ceased.

The Hand of Oberon

Soft-spoken, perceptive and more than a little wise. Vialle will try to moderate those who are rash, because she does not believe in acting in ignorance. Yet she will, if circumstances are right—move quickly, taking actions, giving orders, and generally not wasting valuable time.

Above all, Vialle does not hide her feelings. She will smile, blush, cry, touch a hand in sympathy, or readily admit to liking a stranger. In particular, Vialle will try to reach out to the most jaded, hurt, or emotionally shielded characters, offering sympathy, privacy, and help.

Watch your role-players. If they form a strong attachment to Vialle, if they fiercely react to any threat against her, then you're role-playing her the right way.

VIALLE AS A PLAYER IN THE GAMES OF THE AMBER COURT

As any elder Amberite would point out, someone so outwardly good as Vialle must be suspect. So try to imagine what secret motives Vialle might have, or what hidden role she might be playing.

For example, is it really an accident that she ended up as Queen of Amber? After all, Queen Moire of Rebma forced Vialle upon Random. Could it be that Moire had some foresight? If so, then Vialle may be a Rebman pawn, or may be working toward some Rebman goal. It's also interesting that Vialle doesn't look much like the other denizens of Rebma. Might she be from somewhere else? A Vialle, Shape Shifting to blindness, from the Courts of Chaos, or from some other realm, would be most interesting.

Finally, just an observation. How is it that a blind woman is a Queen of Amber, and the Logrus very much wants a one-eyed woman on the throne in the Courts of Chaos? It seems kind of an odd coincidence...

Constant Allies & Enemies:

Random, her devoted husband, is more than eager to attack anyone who would threaten Vialle. Among the other elder Amberites she doubtless has other supporters, but she can count on Corwin above all. In addition, Vialle was fond of Martin when he was a young boy in Rebma, and they are likely still close. Vialle also has strong connections in her homeland, from Queen Moire on down through the ranks of the Rebman nobility.

REVISITING THE ELDER AMBERITES

As with any characters presented by Zelazny, there are probably a hundred potential versions of each of the elder Amberites. Certainly there are many times more than the meagre print space of this book allows.

So, which to include?

Some, like Benedict and Llewella, don't require new versions at all. Just a couple of paragraphs, and a couple of fun quotes, to show them off from a slightly different perspective.

Gérard and Julian didn't make it here at all.

In the case of others, like Bleys and Corwin, limiting it to just one version was hellish.

Ultimately, the version you see here should be an extreme version, a way of looking at the character that's radically different from the three versions in the first role-playing book.

That's the theory, anyway...



BENEDICT

Benedict stood in the midst of activity, peering at his thumbnail through a rifle barrel. He looked up immediately and our eyes met. Perhaps a dozen men moved about him, carrying weapons, cleaning weapons, stacking weapons.

"I thought you were in Kashfa," I said.

"Was," he replied.

I gave him a chance to continue, but nothing was forthcoming. Benedict has never been noted for loquacity.

"Looks like you're getting ready for something close to home," I remarked, knowing that gunpowder was useless here and that the special ammo we had only worked in the area of Amber and certain adjacent kingdoms.

"Always best to be safe," he said.

"Would you care to elaborate on that?" I asked.

"Not now," he answered, a reply twice as long as I'd anticipated and holding out hope of future enlightenment.

"Should we all be digging in?" I asked. "Fortifying the town? Arming ourselves? Raising—"

"It won't come to that," he said. "Just go on about your business."

"But—"

He turned away. I'd a feeling the conversation was over. I was sure of it when he ignored my next several questions...

Sign of Chaos

No need for another version of Benedict. He is as awesome as ever, as archetypal as ever.

A main tenet of military thought is called 'Economy of Force.' Benedict seems to have taken that and used it in the shaping of his speech, hoarding his words as if they were ammunition drawn from a limited supply, reluctant to waste such precious ordnance for trivial purpose.

In other words, Benedict doesn't say a whole lot.

About the only really new thing we learn about Benedict is that the horse with the red and white stripes is called Glemdenning.

Still, it's great to see Benedict finally display his own version of a sense of humor, as in the following section:

"You've a resemblance to Eric or to Corwin," came a soft, familiar voice, "though I know you not. But you wear the Jewel, which makes your person too important to risk in a petty squabble."

I came to a stop and turned my head. It was Benedict whom I beheld—a Benedict with two normal hands.

"My name is Merlin and I'm Corwin's son," I said, "and this is a master duelist from the Courts of Chaos."

"You appear to be on a mission, Merlin. Be about it then," Benedict said.

The point of Borel's blade flicked into a position about ten inches from my throat. "You are going nowhere," he stated, "not with that jewel."

There was no sound as Benedict's blade was drawn and moved to beat Borel's off its line.

"As I said, be on your way, Merlin," Benedict told me.

I got to my feet, moved quickly out of range, passed them both cautiously.

"If you kill him," Jurt said, "he can rematerialize after a period of time."

"How interesting," Benedict remarked, flicking off an attack and retreating slightly. "How long a time?"

"Several hours."

"And how much time will you need to complete whatever you're about?"

Jurt looked at me.

"I'm not certain," I answered.

Benedict executed an odd little parry, followed by a strange shuffling step and a brief slashing attack. A button flew from Borel's shirt front.

"In that case I'll make this last for a time," Benedict said. "Good luck, lad."

He gave me a quick salute with the weapon, at which moment Borel attacked. Benedict used an Italianate sixte which threw both their points off to the side, advancing as he did so. He reached forward quickly then with his left hand and pulled the other's nose. Then he pushed him away, stepped back a pace, and smiled.

"What do you usually charge for lessons?" I overheard him asking as Jurt and I hurried down the path.

Knight of Shadows

BLEYS—MASTER OF SPIKARDS

(400 POINT VERSION)

His eyes were mocking and wise, his hair red as his sister Fiona's or his late brother Brand's. Or Luke's, for that matter.

"Bleys," I said, "what the hell is going on?"

"I've the rest of Delwin's message," he said, reaching into his pocket and extending his hand. "Here."

I reached into the mirror and accepted it. It was yet another spikard, like the one I wore.

"It is the one of which Delwin spoke," he said.

"You must never wear it."

I studied it for several moments.

"What am I to do with it?" I asked.

"Put it in your pocket. A use may suggest itself at some point."

"How did you come by it?"

"I switched it after Mandor left it, for the one you wear now."

"How many are there, anyway?"

"Nine," he replied.

"I suppose you know all about them."

"More than most..."

Prince of Chaos

"Ancient powers," she said. "How ancient?"

"Before there was an Amber, they were," stated Memory.

"Before there was a Jewel of Judgement—the Eye of the Serpent?"

"No," Memory responded.

She drew a sudden breath.

"Their number?" she said.

"Eleven," Memory replied.

Vialle's query, in "The Salesman's Tale"

Bleys has a penchant for hiding himself away in Shadow whenever things look uncertain in Amber. Since a gunman is taking potshots at Amberites, especially at Bleys, Bleys has defined the situation as definitely uncertain.

From that point on Bleys makes himself scarce. He comes up in conversation, usually in conjunction with his ongoing association with Fiona, but not in the flesh. Even when he does make an appearance, it's just in Merlin's dream of the Corridor of Mirrors.

Although, upon awakening, Merlin finds a second spikard in his pocket.

One last note.

Bleys wears his three rings prominently. He always has.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [25 Points]

STRENGTH = [25 Points]

ENDURANCE = [25 Points]

WARFARE = [95 Points]

POWERS

Advanced Pattern Imprint [75 Points]

Advanced Trump Artistry [60 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

Complex Construct Conjunction [50 Points] - Bleys has as much control over Constructs, and the Spikards, as Delwin or Sand. In the case of the Spikards, Bleys keeps track of their movement through Shadow, and is always aware of how they are being used. He's also managed to negate all the controlling effects of the Spikards, so he can wear his rings, and wield his sword, without fear of interference. Also includes conventional Conjunction.

CONSTRUCTS

Spikards [30 Points] - Bleys has possession of four of the Spikards. Three are in the form of rings—Emerald, Ruby and Sapphire—and the fourth is formed into Bleys' Golden Sword.

• Countless Spikard Power Sources [6 Points]

- Countless Quantity [*3 Points]
- Shadow of Power [1 Point Each]
- Control of Contents [1 Point]

• Ring & Sword Manifestations [48 Points]

- flux-Pin Connections [*3 Points]
- Named & Numbered Quantity [*2 Points]
- Spell Processor [8 Points]

• Power-Based Psyche [+24 Points]

• Addictive Power Rush [+8 Points] - By supplying whoever invokes their power with a steady rush of power, the Spikards seek to create a dependence.

• Lines of Control [+8 Points] - Each Spikard tries to warp the wearer's personality.

• Protective Barrier [+8 Points] - The Spikards prevent themselves from being removed, from being probed by other minds, or even from being touched by strangers.

BRAND-GHOST

(100 POINT VERSION)

"Hey!" came a voice from overhead, and I looked up. The black-and-white stranger was seated atop the stone, smoking a thin cigar. He held a chalice in his left hand. "You interest me, kid," he went on. "What's your name?"

"Merlin," I answered. "What's yours?"

Instead of replying, he pushed himself outward, fell in slow motion, landed on his feet beside me. His left eye squinted as he studied me. The shadows flowed like dark water down his right side. He blew silvery smoke into the air.

"You're a live one," he announced then, "with the mark of the Pattern and the mark of Chaos upon you. You bear the blood of Amber. What is your lineage, Merlin?"

The shadows parted for a moment, and I saw that his right eye was hidden by a patch.

"I am the son of Corwin," I told him, "and you are—somehow—the traitor Brand."

"You have named me," he said, "but I never betrayed what I believed in."

"That being your own ambition," I said. "Your home and your family and the forces of Order never mattered to you, did they?"

He snorted.

"I will not argue with a presumptuous puppy."

"I've no desire to argue with you either. For whatever it's worth, your son Rinaldo is probably my best friend."

I turned away and began walking. His hand fell upon my shoulder.

"Wait!" he said. "What is this talk? Rinaldo is but a lad."

"Wrong," I answered. "He's around my age."

His hand fell away, and I turned. He had dropped his cigar, which lay smoking upon the trail, and he'd transferred the chalice to his shadow-clad hand. He massaged his brow.

"That much time has passed in the mainlines..." he remarked.

On a whim, I withdrew my Trumps, shuffled out Luke's field it up for him to see.

"That's Rinaldo," I said.

He reached for it, and for some obscure reason I let him take it. He stared at it for a long while.

"Trump contact doesn't seem to work from here," I said.

He looked up, shook his head, and handed the card back to me.

"No, it wouldn't," he stated. "How...is he?"

"You know that he killed Caine to avenge you?"

"No, I didn't know. But I'd expect no less of him."

"You're not exactly Brand, are you?"

He threw back his head and laughed.

"I am entirely Brand, and I am not Brand as you might have known him. Anything more than that will cost you."

"What will it cost me to learn what you really are?" I inquired as I cased my cards.

He raised the chalice, held it before him with both hands, like a begging bowl.

"Some of your blood," he said.

"You've become a vampire?"

"No, I'm a Pattern-ghost," he replied. "Bleed for me, and I'll explain."

Knight of Shadows

One. Brand stained the Primal Pattern with Martin's blood, thereby changing the fundamental balance of the universe.

Two. All Broken Patterns are echoes of the damage done to the Primal Pattern.

Three. Jasra, the foremost user of Broken Pattern, is Brand's wife.

Four. Luke, Merlin's best friend, and also Merlin's sharpest enemy, is Brand's son.

Five. Brand is credited with having taken the full initiation into the power of the Fount of Four Worlds.

And the list could easily go on.

Brand is progenitor, creator, and oracle. How can we see him as any less than the builder of the Broken Pattern, the Fount of Power, and the Tragoliths? He may even have been the agent behind the release of the Spikards. Plus, he had a decided influence in everything from the affairs of the Courts of Chaos, to the course of his son Luke's life.

Brand's Pattern-Ghost is no less visionary. He will know himself, and his weaknesses.

He'll also know that he has his own route to self-sufficiency, through Jasra and the Fount of Power...

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Human [+25 Points]

STRENGTH = Human [+25 Points]

ENDURANCE = Human [+25 Points]

WARFARE = Human [+25 Points] - Although Brand's grasp of strategy and tactics are still with him, his physical skills, coordination and dexterity have all plummeted.



POWER

Advanced Pattern Imprint [75 Points]

Living Trump [100 Points] - Brand, already a Trump Artist, bathed in the Fount of Power to profoundly increase his Trump abilities. He can read the subjects of the Trumps, contact people without the Trumps themselves, reach through Shadow and pull things through to him, teleport through Shadow at will, can locate and observe anyone in Shadow, and can even look into their thoughts.

If Brand finds the Fount again, and takes another bath, he'll be able to boost all Attributes of Psyche, Strength, Endurance and Warfare. Perhaps to Amber Rank, perhaps even higher. He'll also have all the power he needs to sustain himself as a Pattern-Ghost.

Sorcery [15 Points]

Conversational Compelling [35 Points] - Without using a Psychic contact, Brand's Ghost (or, indeed, Brand himself), can issue subtle High Compellings through speech alone. It takes him from fifteen minutes to an hour of conversing with his victim, but he can tamper with memories, establish new drives and desires, and even insert a limited Geas. Because the Conversational High Compelling is restricted to spoken language, it's not possible to convey any complex Psychic impressions or artificial personalities. To an observer, the conversation will seem like ordinary speech, although the topics will change very quickly.

BAD STUFF

[+25 Points]

CAINE—LIVELY CORPSE (300 POINT VERSION)

"Caine is dead. Murdered," he replied. "This morning."

"How did it happen?"

"He was off in Shadow Deiga—a distant port with which we have commerce. He was with Gérard, to renegotiate an old trade agreement. He was shot, through the heart. Died instantly."

Random & Merlin, Trumps of Doom

Poor, poor Caine. So soon dead. Again.

Yeah. Right.

Caine appears as a Pattern-Ghost, along with Eric, Benedict and Gérard, supposedly summoned up to retrieve Coral and the Jewel of Judgement.

But what if Caine is really Caine? What if this Caine's ghost, who acts more like a spectator than participant, is actually the real Caine? After all, if Dara is manipulating Logrus-Ghosts, doesn't it make sense that someone is doing the same job in Amber?

Besides, what better disguise, and what better way to tickle his sense of humor, than for Caine to act the part of his very own ghost?

Caine juggled, flipped, palmed and passed a dagger, reflexively, through some private routine, an expression of amused fascination on his face.

Prince of Chaos

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [75 Points]

STRENGTH = Amber

ENDURANCE = Amber

WARFARE = [75 Points]

POWERS

Advanced Pattern Imprint [75 Points]

Trump Tricks [20 Points] - While no artist, Caine has learned to manipulate Trump in special ways. He can observe other Trump conversations, and sometimes even catch the surface thoughts of those he monitors.

Sorcery [15 Points]

Pattern Conjunction [40 Points] - Caine can Conjure items directly from the heart of Pattern, including his own Pattern-Ghosts. Caine's daggers are also conjured from the Pattern.

CORWIN

He chuckled as he reached across the altar, raised a burning taper and used it to light one of the others which had apparently gone out in some draft.

"I've pissed on my own grave," he announced. "Can't pass up the pleasure of lighting a candle to myself in my own church."

He extended his left hand in my direction without looking at me.

"Give me Grayswandir," he said.

I slipped it off and passed it to him. He unfastened it and buckled it about his waist, loosened it in its sheath.

"All right. What now?" he asked.

Prince of Chaos

He's out.

From the end of the Patternfall War, until his release at the end of Merlin's Saga, Corwin has been Dara's prisoner.

Given the peculiar workings of time, especially near the Abyss (and his prison seems connected to the Abyss), it's possible that not all that much time has passed for Corwin. That may explain why he takes his release with a certain calm reserve.

On the other hand, Corwin might have been a bit too busy to be really bothered about his imprisonment...



CORWIN—DARA'S PRISONER

(450 POINT VERSION)

...Grayswandir lay there before it, drawn a few inches from the scabbard. I'd a feeling this was the real thing, that the version worn by the Pattern ghost of my father was itself a reconstruction.

I reached forward, raised it, drew it...

There was a feeling of power as I held it, swung it, struck an en guard, lunged, advanced. The spikard came alive, center of a web of forces. I looked down, suddenly self-conscious.

"...And this is my father's blade," I said, returning to the altar, where I sheathed it. Reluctantly, I left it there.

Prince of Chaos

Corwin was pretty ticked off already, even before Dara locked him up. This thing about being used in a "breeding experiment" had really rubbed him the wrong way. So, if Corwin's thoughts turned to revenge, how would he get in his licks?

He wouldn't want to take anything out on Merlin. He'd taken a liking to his son.

On the other hand, since Dara wanted to be a king's mother, wouldn't it be appropriate to grant her wish? Not to put Merlin on the Amber throne. No, Corwin would pull the stings necessary to get Merlin in line for the throne of the Courts of Chaos.

Of course, Corwin didn't think Merlin would actually take the crown. After all, the kid already said he didn't want any such thing. Yup, it would serve Dara right, expecting to be Queen Mother all over again, only this time it would be her own son who would screw things up.

Motivation aside, there is still the matter of means. How could Corwin have influenced events from his dark cell?

First, Corwin has picked up a few tricks since his last stint in a dungeon. His attunements to the Jewel of Judgement, to the Pattern of Amber, and to the Pattern of his own creation are all much greater. Corwin may have used his time alone, and in darkness, to spy and to meddle, simply by evoking a mental Pattern.

Then there's Grayswandir. It's been no more than a few steps away, sitting on Corwin's altar, for his entire imprisonment. If Grayswandir is a Spikard, or even "only" a part of the template upon which Pattern is based, then Corwin may have been able to lay his mind upon it, and use it from that short distance...

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [50 Points]
STRENGTH = [75 Points]
ENDURANCE = [100 Points]
WARFARE = [100 Points]

POWERS

Advanced Pattern Imprint [75 Points] - Corwin has the images of two Patterns, that of Amber, and that of his own creation, and he can do tricks with either of them.

Initiate of the Jewel of Judgement [10 Points]

Power Words [15 Points] - Magic Negation, Chaos Negation, Psychic Disrupt, Pain Attack (customized as a hot foot), Process Surge, Process Snuff, Spark, Burst of Magic, Weaken Structure, and Thunder.

CREATURES AND ARTIFACTS OF POWER

"Good copy," he said, "but not even the Pattern can duplicate Grayswandir."

"I thought a section of the Pattern was reproduced on the blade."

"Maybe it's the other way around," he said.

"What do you mean?"

"Ask the other Corwin sometime," he said. "It has to do with something we were talking about recently."

*Corwin's Ghost & Merlin,
in Prince of Chaos*

Grayswandir, Elemental Spikard [27 Points] - In addition to its functions as a Pattern Sword (being destructive to both supernatural creatures and creatures of chaos), Grayswandir is also a key to contacting and controlling all the other spikards.

• **Countless Spikard Power Sources [3 Points]**

• Countless Quantity [*3 Points]

• Power Source Shadows [1 Point Each]

• **Sword Manifestation [24 Points]**

• flux-Pin Connection [*3 Points]

• Deadly Damage [4 Points]

• **Psychic Barrier [4 Points]** - While in sword form all the psychic traps and magical imperatives of the spikard are blocked.

BAD STUFF

[+2 Points]

CORWIN-GHOST OF CORWIN'S PATTERN (200 POINT VERSION)

"...I drew that thing," he went on, a little later, "and I'm the only person ever to have walked it. Consequently, I'm the only ghost it can summon. Also, it seems to regard me with something other than utilitarian attention. We can communicate, in a way, and it seems to have been willing to devote the energy needed to keep me stable—for a long while now. We have our own plans, and our relationship seems almost symbiotic..."

Prince of Chaos

Corwin's new buddy, the ghost created by his own version of the Pattern, has played a large role in Merlin's Saga. Most of it was behind the scenes, and he had to slug Merlin and haul him down into the Undershadow, but Corwin's Ghost was there when he was needed.

As protector of Corwin's Pattern, Corwin's Ghost has done a good job in lining up backup forces. Ghosts of Deirdre and Luke are now dependent on Corwin's Pattern, and should serve it well. Likewise, he's managed to get Merlin, Luke, and even Jurt to commit to its care. Perhaps best of all, by the end of Merlin's Saga, Coral, along with the implanted Jewel of Judgement, wanted by both the Primal Pattern and the Logrus, had been delivered to the presence of Corwin's Pattern.

True, when last we saw Corwin's Ghost, he was a prisoner. He'd volunteered as Corwin's substitute, staying behind in Dara's prison when the original Corwin escaped. Since there are a number of ways by which Corwin's Ghost might escape (he might even be able to simply dissolve himself, and then be reconstructed at the center of Corwin's Pattern), it's likely that he'll be back very soon.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [25 Points]
STRENGTH = [25 Points]
ENDURANCE = [50 Points]
WARFARE = [100 Points]

POWERS

Corwin's Pattern Imprint, Advanced [0 Points] - As an artifact of Corwin's Pattern, Corwin's Ghost is maintained with all the abilities of someone with Advanced Pattern Imprint. Just as Corwin's Ghost draws substance from Corwin's Pattern, so Corwin's Pattern is able to think and plan using the memories and personality of this copy of Corwin.

DEIRDRE—GHOST OF PATTERN

(100 POINT VERSION)

She raised my hand to her mouth as if she were about to kiss it. But her lips moved by, to the place on my wrist where I had cut myself at Brand's request. Then it hit me. Something about the blood of Amber must hold a special attraction for Pattern-ghosts.

I tried to draw my hand away, but the strength of Amber was hers also.

Knight of Shadows

"...those of Amber's Pattern and those of the Logrus are more in the nature of ephemerae."

"That's been my experience," I said.

"—except for one, to whom you ministered, for which I am grateful. She is under my protection now, for so long as it shall last."

Corwin's Pattern-Ghost and Merlin,
in Prince of Chaos

Oh goody, we get Deirdre back...

Merlin meets Deirdre, and gives her his blood, in the Undershadow, the place of the trial between Pattern and Logrus. After that, Corwin's Ghost explains that she's now being maintained by Corwin's Pattern.

The problem is, what the heck was Deirdre doing there?

Supposedly, the only ghosts present were those evoked by either the Pattern or the Logrus as part of the trial, as means of manipulating Merlin. Yet Deirdre seemed to have been waiting a long time, and without any apparent purpose.

So perhaps Deirdre was actually brought in by the third power in the game, by Corwin's Pattern. That would explain why Corwin's Ghost, a construct of Corwin's Pattern, brought Merlin to the Undershadow after the ghosts of Dworkin and Oberon had failed. Corwin's Ghost did the Primal Pattern a favor and, in return, the Pattern summoned up a ghost of Deirdre.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = Amber Rank

STRENGTH = Amber Rank

ENDURANCE = Amber Rank

WARFARE = [50 Points]

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

DWORKIN—MADMAN AND/OR SAGE

(550 POINT VERSION)

"I believe that Dworkin had touched the Logrus too closely," he continued, "and so became subject to manipulation. He was sufficiently sophisticated, however, that he realized this and resisted. This resulted in his madness, with a reciprocal damaging effect on the Pattern itself because of their close connection. This, in turn, caused the Pattern to leave him alone, rather than risk further trauma. The damage was done, though, and the Logrus gained a small edge. This allowed it to act in the realm of order when Prince Brand began his experiments to increase his personal abilities. I believe he laid himself open to control and became an unwitting agent of the Logrus."

"That's a lot of supposition," I said.

"Consider," he responded, "that his aims became those of a madman. They make much more sense when seen as the goal of something wanting to destroy all order, to restore the universe to chaos."

Suhuy & Merlin, in *Prince of Chaos*

A lovely sentiment. It's especially suspect coming from Dworkin's opposite number, Suhuy, otherwise known as the Keeper of the Logrus. Being around the Logrus too much is supposed to drive people crazy.

On the other hand, when you look at Dworkin's implanting the Jewel of Judgement into Coral's eye socket, it's hard to come to any sane conclusion. Maybe Suhuy is right, maybe Dworkin is out to destroy order, and he saw Coral as a convenient way of returning the Eye to the Serpent of Chaos.

Or perhaps not. Assigning such mundane goals as the destruction of order might be too simple a way of looking at Dworkin. With the complexities going around in that old head, it's hard to figure out what his true goals might be.

On the surface, though, he certainly looks crazy.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [125 Points]

STRENGTH = [25 Points]

ENDURANCE = [25 Points]

WARFARE = [25 Points]

POWERS

Advanced Pattern Imprint [75 Points]

Mastery of the Jewel of Judgement [25 Points]

Advanced Logrus Mastery [70 Points]

Advanced Trump Conjunction [100 Points] - A combination of Advanced Trump Artistry and Conjunction, which allows Dworkin to summon up Trump, or to create Trump cards themselves capable of Conjunction.

Advanced Shape Shift [65 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

PERSONAL ITEMS

He moved away and took down what appeared to be a sheathed wand from the wall, where it had hung suspended from a peg. He hung the sheath upon his belt, then crossed to a small cabinet and removed a flat leather-bound case from one of its drawers. It rattled with a faint metallic sound as he slipped it into a pocket. A small jewelry box vanished up a sleeve without any sound.

Knight of Shadows

Dworkin's Healing Wand [15 Points] - Designed for medical emergencies, Dworkin has created the Wand so that it can speed healing in his patients. He uses it to store a number of medical spells.

- **Manipulate Shadow Stuff [1 Point]**

- **Rapid Healing [2 Points]**

- **Transfer Healing Power [10 Points]**

- **Named & Numbered Spells [2 Points]**

Dworkin's Portable Surgery [Zero Points] - Inside the leather case are a complete set of operating tools, including forceps, scalpels, and sutures, plus hypodermics supplied with anaesthesia and other drugs.

Jewelry Box [Zero Points] - Could this be a spikard case?

Consider the sequence of events. First, part of Castle Amber blows up, opening a doorway from Merlin's room to Brand's. Just after that, Dworkin rescues Merlin, gets him to drink a "green liquid from a silver flask," which causes Merlin to relax, and then Dworkin gestures so that the "Logrus Sign without the Logrus came over me."

Someone planted the spikard in Brand's room, specifically so that Merlin would find it. Dworkin not only had the means, and the opportunity, but he also could have given Merlin a magical "suggestion" that would guarantee the spikard's discovery. Remember also that Mandor, carrying old King Swayvill's spikard, was also the subject of Dworkin's attentions.

Dworkin could have been at the center of all the manipulations around the spikards. The only question that remains is that of motive...

ERIC—JUDGEMENT'S GHOST

(300 POINT VERSION)

My arm felt as if someone had struck it with a baseball bat. A wisp of smoke rose from the spikard. For a moment, my four upright uncles stood unmoving. And my fifth remained supine.

Then, slowly, Eric raised his weapon. And he continued to raise it, as Benedict, Caine and Gérard drew theirs. He straightened as he held it before his face. The others did the same. It looked strangely like a salute; and Eric's eyes met mine.

"I know you," he said.

Then they all completed the gesture, and faded, faded, turned to smoke, and blew away.

Prince of Chaos

When Eric says "I know you" to Merlin, it just sends shivers up my spine.

Especially since it doesn't seem to fit in with Eric being just another Pattern-Ghost. Just another of the Pattern's puppets. After all, the shorting out of the Spikard occurred before the image of the Pattern appeared. Likewise, the Pattern appeared after Eric and his three companions had departed.

Perhaps Eric's Ghost is actually a creation of the Jewel of Judgement. And, given that Eric died in time to the pulsations of the Jewel on his chest, it's possible that he has the kind of pull with the three-dimensional Pattern in the Jewel that Corwin's Ghost has with Corwin's Pattern.

If that were the case, when Eric felt it necessary to protect Coral from her Chaos captors, he created his own Ghost, and that of those brothers he felt were reliable, Benedict, Caine and Gérard, from the Pattern inside the Jewel.

And now, having tasted a bit of life again, even as a Ghost, Eric will be searching for a way out.

It might not be long before we'll again see Eric, the guy who was a real match for Corwin, not just in skill, or in guile, but in the down-and-dirty patented Amber style of street fighting. Consider the following passage:

Dalt was a couple of inches taller than Eric, and he had a longer reach. He moved forward immediately. I expected some kind of cut from that big blade he carried, but he went in for a point-attack. Eric, using a lighter weapon, sidestepped and came in under his arm. Dalt dropped the point of his blade, moved to his left and parried it. The two weapons were suited for very different

styles—Eric's being at the heaviest end of the rapier class, Dalt's at the lighter end of broadsword. Dalt's could be a single-handed weapon for a big-enough, strong-enough guy. I'd have had to use it two-handed myself. Dalt tried an upward cut just then, of the sort a Japanese swordsman would refer to as kiriage. Eric simply stepped back and tried for a wrist cut as it passed him. Dalt suddenly moved his left hand to the hilt and executed a blinding two-handed cut of the sort known as naname giri. Eric continued to circle, trying for the wrist yet again.

Suddenly, Dalt opened his right hand and let it drift back, as his right foot performed a huge semi-circular step to his rear and his left arm moved forward, leaving him in a left-handed European en garde position, from which that massive arm and matching blade immediately extended, performing an inside beat upon Eric's blade followed by a lunge. Eric parried as his right foot crossed behind his left and he sprang backwards. Even so, I saw a spark as his guard was creased. He feinted in sixte, however, dropped his point beneath the parry that followed, extended his arm in quatre, raised himself and his blade into something resembling a stop-thrust targeting the left shoulder as the parry crossed, turned his wrist, and slashed Dalt across the left forearm.

Caine applauded, but Dalt simply brought his hands together and separated them again, executing a little hop-step as he did so, leaving him in a right en garde position. Eric drew circles in the air with the point of his weapon and smiled.

"Cute little dance routine you have there," he said.

Then Eric lunged, was parried, retreated, side-stepped, threw a front kick at Dalt's kneecap, missed, then moved with perfect timing as Dalt attempted a head cut. Switching to the Japanese himself, he spun in to the larger man's right, a maneuver I'd seen in a kumatchi exercise, his own blade rising and falling as Dalt's cut swept past. Dalt's right forearm went suddenly wet, a thing I did not really notice until after Eric had rotated his weapon, blade pointing outward and upward, and, the guard covering his knuckles, had driven his fist

against the right side of Dalt's jaw. He kicked him then behind the knee and struck him with his left shoulder. Dalt stumbled and fell. Eric immediately kicked him, kidney, elbow, thigh—the latter only because he missed the knee—set his boot upon Dalt's weapon and swung his own about to bring its point in line with the man's heart.

Prince of Chaos

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [40 Points]

STRENGTH = [15 Points]

ENDURANCE = [15 Points]

WARFARE = [100 Points]

POWERS

Advanced Pattern Imprint [75 Points]

Intimate of the Jewel of Judgement [25 Points]

"Pattern" Sorcery [30 Points] - Eric has found the secret of creating spells based on Pattern energy. He can also use the Jewel of Judgement as a device for storing, generating and casting magical spells.



FIONA—HIGH COURT MEDDLER

(400 POINT VERSION)

"You used the Trump I'd made to go through to the bar in there?" I asked, gesturing.

"Yes, right after you went in to dance. I watched you for about an hour, mostly from the terrace. And I'd told you to be wary."

"Sorry, I was smitten."

"I'd forgotten they don't serve absinthe here. I had to make do with a frozen margarita."

"Sorry about that, too. Then you hot-wired a car and followed us when we left?"

"Yes. I waited in her parking lot and maintained the most peripheral of touches with you via your Trump. If I'd felt danger I would have come in after you."

"Thanks. How peripheral?"

"I am not a voyeur, if that's what you mean..."

Merlin & Fiona, in *Trumps of Doom*

Fiona is not a voyeur, surely. Still, other names come to mind.

Consider that she was witness to Merlin's affair with Meg Devlin. Then consider the following points.

First, Meg Devlin was possessed by the Ty'iga at the time, and has no memory of her tryst with Merlin.

Second, later on in Merlin's Saga, the Pattern itself goes to a considerable amount of trouble to get Coral pregnant by Merlin.

Third, in the aftermath of this episode Fiona starts to take a fair degree of interest in the affairs of the Courts of Chaos. For example, she forges a close alliance with Mandor.

Add all that up, and what do you get? How about Fiona, guardian angel of Merlin's first child? A child who, if Merlin is crowned, becomes the number one successor to the throne of the Courts of Chaos. A child unknown and unsuspected, but, given that Fiona could have Trump-recorded the conception, a child with sterling credentials.

So Fiona is not a voyeur, but she is certainly an opportunist.

Or power-behind-the-throne.

As Merlin put it, "...Fiona had once known I was creating a Trump, and come pounding on the door to see what the hell was going on." It's entirely possible that Fiona also had a premonition, a hunch, that a truly great opportunity had been dropped in her lap.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [125 Points]

STRENGTH = Amber Rank

ENDURANCE = [50 Points]

WARFARE = [25 Points]

POWERS

Advanced Pattern Imprint [75 Points]

Advanced Trump Artistry [60 Points]

Sorcery [15 Points]

Responses and High Compellings [40 Points] -

Fiona has taken Conjurage and turned it into a high art. Aside from being able to summon things with blinding speed, she can also tamper with the memories, motivations and goals of her subjects.

CREATURES AND ARTIFACTS

The view in the mirror was not the same as that which had presented itself to my unaided scrutiny. I was able to see beyond the tree now, through the fog, to discern most of the strange Pattern which twisted its bright way about the ground, working its passages inward to its off-center terminus, the only spot still concealed by an unmoving tower of white, within which tiny lights like stars seemed to burn.

"It doesn't look like the Pattern back in Amber," I said.

"No," she answered. "Is it anything like the Logrus?"

"Not really. The Logrus actually alters itself somewhat, constantly. Still, it's more angular, whereas this is mostly curves and bends."

I studied it a little longer, then returned her looking glass.

"Interesting spell on the mirror," I commented, for I had been studying this also, while I held it.

"And much more difficult than you'd think," she responded...

Blood of Amber

Fiona's Silver Mirror [10 Points] - What is reflected is tempered by the mirror's ability to discern the truth in any image. It can cut through any conventional fog, mist or darkness, can penetrate magical illusions, including spells of invisibility or disguise, and show the magical energies emanating from any person or object.

• "Augmented" Psychic Force [8 Points]

• Named & Numbered Shapes [2 Points] - Different images.

FLORIMEL—FULL OF SURPRISES

(300 POINT VERSION)

She pursed her lips. "I don't like leaving you—though I'm not anxious to stay either. Care to take along a hand grenade?"

She raised her purse and began to open it.

"No. Thanks. Why do you have it, anyway?"

She smiled. "I always carry them in this shadow. They sometimes come in handy..."

Blood of Amber

Flora shows more of her true strength...

Perhaps Corwin was closed-minded, or perhaps because Flora isn't quite so threatened, but we see a lot more of her Amberish feistiness, and her fun-loving personality, comes out when she's hanging around with Merlin.

On the other hand, she isn't shy about breaking into other people's rooms, or punching people in the face.

And, speaking of punching people, Flora seems to have a serious grudge against Jasra. That should make things very interesting should Jasra and Luke try to become part of Amber's social elite.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [70 Points]

STRENGTH = [50 Points]

ENDURANCE = [50 Points]

WARFARE = [70 Points]

POWERS

Pattern Imprint [50 Points]

CREATURES AND ARTIFACTS OF POWER

Flora's Irish Wolfhounds [10 Points] - All eight, Donner, Blitzen, etc., are highly trained. Mostly they just lay around looking casually vicious, but they can coordinate an attack deadly even against Amberites.

- Named & Numbered [*2 Points]
- Combat Training [1 Points]
- Resistant to Weapons [1 Point]
- Extra Hard Teeth [1 Point]
- Psychic Sensitivity [1 Point]
- Follow Shadow Trail [1 Point]

LLEWELLA

"Everybody's been so busy lately," Llewella remarked when I'd finished talking. "It almost makes me feel guilty."

I studied the delicate green of her more-than-olive complexion, her full lips, her large catlike eyes.

"But not quite," she added.

Sign of Chaos

Maybe one of these days we'll find a book written from Llewella's point of view. That might be the only way we could find out what goes on in that mysterious mind of hers.

There's nothing in the Merlin Saga that contradicts what we already know about Llewella. She remains, by turns, withdrawn and suspicious.

She's either the most disinterested, or the most successful player in the Amber family game. Either a manipulator who raises no suspicion, or a contestant who is completely out of the game.

Or some combination of the two.

"Llewella, you're too damned suspicious," I said.

"It comes of having lived a long time."

"Well, I hope to live a long time myself, and I hope it doesn't make me look for an ulterior motive in every human act."

She smiled. "Of course. Forget I said anything," she told me, knowing I wouldn't. "Have a good time."

Sign of Chaos

OBERON

"...If you survived the reconstruction of the Pattern, how come you didn't return to Amber and continue your reign?" I asked. "Why'd you let Random get crowned and muddy the picture even further?"

He laughed.

"But I didn't survive it," he said. "I was destroyed in the process. I am a ghost, returned to solicit a living champion for Amber against the rising power of the Logrus."

Knight of Shadows

Oberon could be dead, killed in repairing the stain of Martin's blood on the Primal Pattern.

On the other hand, maybe Oberon has simply retired for awhile. Can't you just picture him? Enjoying a sunny beach, his great belly sticking out of an unbuttoned hawaiian shirt, in shorts and sandals, sipping large festive drinks, and occasionally lifting his sunglasses to get a better look at the maidens playing in the surf.

A more troublesome possibility is that Oberon has undergone an epic metamorphosis. When Dworkin aimed a question at Oberon, he asked, "Have you lost your taste to be a lord of the living void, a king of chaos?" That's not exactly the same as saying, "are you ready to die?" Maybe Oberon isn't dead. Maybe he has changed into something else. Maybe, in repairing the Pattern, Oberon became the Pattern.

RANDOM—KING OF AMBER (350 POINT VERSION)

"Another relative coming to visit," Random said. "Why couldn't I have been an only child?"

Blood of Amber

Random isn't entirely happy with being Amber's ruler, but perhaps reluctant kings are the best kind...

For one thing, he sure doesn't stand on ceremony. He'll say, "cut the crap" when presented with too much court ritual, and he always wants to move conversations away from formality and onto the business at hand.

"I was corrupt before I had power," Random said, "and rich is better..." Still, he's not above using his power to do a little pushing.

What he pushes for is pretty simple. Random wants to

In the Merlin Saga, every time the Pattern speaks to Merlin, there seems to be the echo of another haughty, imperious, arrogant character, and it tends toward the "come here" and "do this" style of speech.

For example, here are lines from the Pattern and Oberon: "You are here without leave," and, "You may not dictate to me." See if you can figure out who said which.

Oberon's transformation would also explain the "death" of the King of the Courts of Chaos. In order to keep the balance, Swayvill may have had to animate the Logrus in a way similar to Oberon's personification inside the Pattern. Gradually, weakened by the effort, Swayvill may have eventually found it easier to match his old rival tit-for-tat, becoming the voice of the Logrus just as Oberon became the voice of the Pattern.

"You would test me?" he asked.

"Yes."

"As a man, it would hardly have troubled me," he stated. "But being formed out of this spiritual crap now, I don't know. I'd rather not take the chance."

"In that case, I must echo your sentiments with respect to your own proposal."

"Grandson," he said levelly, a ruddy light entering his eyes, "even dead, none of my spawn may address me so. I come for thee now in a less than friendly fashion. I come for thee now, and this journey shall I hale thee amid fires..."

Knight of Shadows

keep Amber safe, to secure his throne, and to keep trouble as far away as possible. Mostly, he knows, that means keeping his siblings from going at each other's throats.

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE = [50 Points]

STRENGTH = [40 Points]

ENDURANCE = [40 Points]

WARFARE = [80 Points]

POWERS

Advanced Pattern Imprint [75 Points]

Trump Artistry [40 Points]

Master of the Jewel of Judgement [25 Points]

Random was around when Dworkin implanted the Jewel of Judgement in Coral's eye socket, but he's not happy about it. Yes, he wants to trust the old geezer. Still, the Jewel was given to him by the Unicorn itself. Random may bide his time, perhaps waiting until Coral has her baby, but he intends to have the thing back as soon as possible.

ZELAZNY-AS-GAME-MASTER

...In a badly plotted story they'd have paused outside the doorway, and I'd have overheard a conversation telling me everything I needed to know about anything...

Prince of Chaos

If the five books of the Merlin Saga were a character's diary in a role-playing campaign, Merlin would be one of several player characters.

That leaves the question of the Game Master. After all, considering what Merlin experiences, there's obviously a superb Game Master running the show.

The problem is, Roger Zelazny isn't a Game Master. In fact, the only role-playing he's ever done took place after the first ten Amber books were complete.

However, because Roger Zelazny is a superb storyteller, he intuitively understands what drives a role-playing campaign. All his characters are realistic, his exotic backgrounds rich and believable, his encounters exciting, and his mysteries... Well, I guess they're mysterious.

Anyway, lurking somewhere inside of Roger Zelazny is a really terrific Game Master. That Game Master's touch shows up all through his interactions with his characters, each a great example for other Game Masters.

So, in this section on Game Master Technique, all based on what we see in Zelazny's work, the guiding hand will be called "Zelazny-as-Game-Master."



THE GRAND DESIGN, OR BIG PICTURE BOOGA~BOOGA

One thing about Zelazny-as-Game-Master, he sure thinks big.

All through the Chronicles, Corwin is continually surprised. Just when he thinks he's got the universe figured out, it turns out that there's yet a greater reality, yet more powers working behind the scenes, and even more devious plots being hatched by his siblings.

Here's a few examples of Zelazny-as-Game-Master introducing new complications as the scale keeps getting bigger in Merlin's Saga.

WE'RE PAWNS

"At some point, the Pattern discovered—or perhaps possessed all along—the ability to create 'ghosts', short-lived simulacra of those who had negotiated it. Fascinating concept, that. I was very interested to learn of it. It provided a major mechanism, supporting my thesis of the Pattern's and possibly the Logrus', direct action in the promotion of physical events. Might they have figured in the setting up of your father as the Pattern's champion against Brand, I wonder?"

"I don't follow," I said. "Setting him up, you say?"

"I've a feeling he was really the Pattern's choice as the next King of Amber, easy to promote, too, as it seemed to coincide with his own wishes. I've wondered about his sudden recovery in that Shadow Earth clinic, and particularly about the circumstances surrounding the accident that put him there, when even with differing time-streams it seemed possible that Brand might have had to be in two places at the same time—imprisoned and looking down the sights of a rifle. Of course, Brand is no longer available to clarify the matter."

Suhuy & Merlin, in Prince of Chaos



Lovely implication here. And coming from a most interesting source.

First off, Zelazny-as-Game-Master presents the Pattern as possibly using Pattern-Ghosts all the way back. Rather than thinking of them as simply a recent invention, they are explored as a possible factor in everything that's gone before.

Secondly, notice that Suhuy used the word "they" when describing Corwin's manipulation. Yes, he implies that Corwin is the champion of the Pattern, but he also implies that both the Logrus and the Pattern were somehow in collusion, agreeing on Corwin as champion.

Aside from the revelation itself, it's also interesting that Zelazny-as-Game-Master has it come from the mouth of Suhuy. Who, as Master of the Logrus, follows the events of Amber closely.

OR, WE'RE PAWNS, BUT WE'RE NOT REALLY HERE

An absolutely terrifying thought occurred to me just then. The Dworkin and Oberon figures had had me thinking briefly of three-dimensional computer simulations. And the Ghostwheel's shadow-scanning ability was based on digitized abstractions of portions of the Pattern I believed to be particularly concerned with this quality. And Ghost had been wondering—almost wistfully, it now seemed—concerning the qualifications for godhood.

Could my own creation be playing games with me? Might Ghost have imprisoned me in a stark and distant shadow, blocked all my efforts at communication, and set about playing an elaborate game with me? If he could beat his own creator, for whom he seemed to feel something of awe, might he not feel he had achieved personal elevation—to a level beyond my status in his private cosmos? Maybe...

Knight of Shadows

Even if this is a red herring, it's a really first class red herring. After all, if Ghostwheel is capable of constructing the kind of simulations that can fool Merlin, why can't Merlin still be inside the simulation?

This goes back to one of those classic problems in metaphysics, where you try to prove that you aren't just a brain in a bottle. René Descartes' solution to this dilemma, *cogito ergo sum* ("I think, therefore I am"), doesn't really eliminate the possibility of being stuck inside one of Ghostwheel's simulations.

Whether such a thing could, should or ought to occur in a campaign is a separate issue. The point is that Zelazny-as-Game-Master is willing to present it to the players as a possibility.

Which, at very least, raises the paranoia factor.

OR, WE'RE PAWNS, BUT NOTHING IS REALLY HERE

I get the impression there's some sort of duel going on between them here, on the underside of reality, between shadows. What if this place came first? Before Shadow, even? What if they've been fighting here since the very beginning, in some strange metaphysical way?

"What if they have?"

That could almost make Shadow an afterthought, a by-product of the tension between the poles.

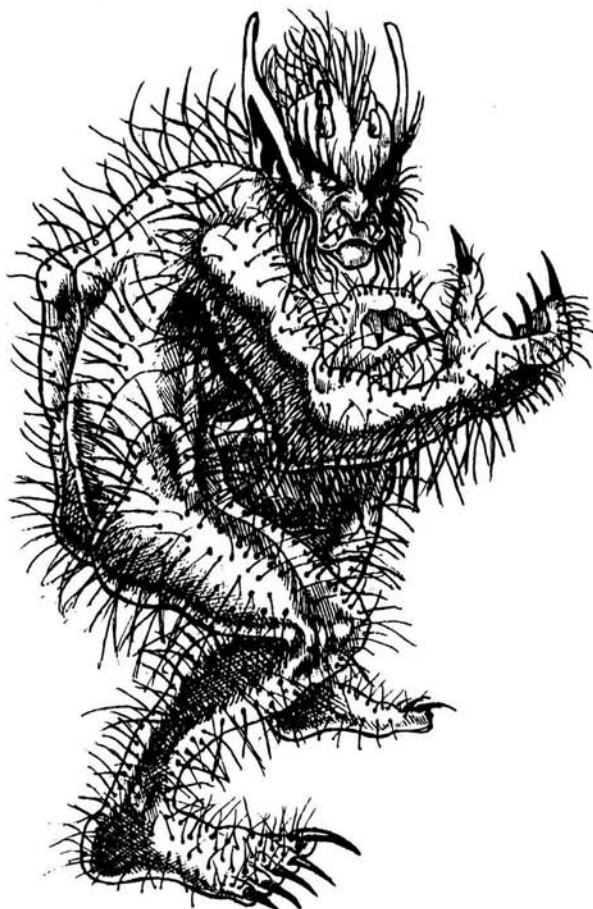
"I'm afraid you've lost me, Frakir."

What if Amber and the Courts of Chaos were created only to provide agents for this conflict?

Frakir & Merlin, in *Knight of Shadows*

Sort of the ultimate way to distort the existing order, and generally mess with the players' heads. Again, Zelazny-as-Game-Master suggests the possibility, but it's probably just an idle speculation.

Probably.



GREAT GAMES AND RELUCTANT PLAYERS

"I really feel used," I said aloud. "You've run my ass ragged, you placed my life in jeopardy more than once, you got me to perform to satisfy your metaphysical voyeurism, then you kicked me out after you got the last thing you wanted—a slightly brighter glow. I guess that gods or powers or whatever the hell you are don't have to say 'thank you' or 'I'm sorry' or 'Go to hell' when they've finished using someone. And obviously you feel no need to justify yourself to me. Well, I'm not a baby carriage. I resent being pushed around by you and the Logrus in whatever game you're playing. How'd you like it if I opened a vein and bled all over you?"

Merlin addressing the Pattern,
in *Knight of Shadows*

The difference between good and great Game Masters is sometimes revealed in just how irritating they are with all their "Big Picture Booga-Booga."

Yes, it's wonderful to have really great campaign ideas, with sweep and majesty and grandeur and all that. Plus, there's a lot to be said for the "threaten-to-smash-the-universe-into-pulp" theory of campaign management. It does get things moving right along.

It's just that there's a right way and a wrong way to go about it.

It's wrong for the Game Master to shove something down the throat of a player.

It's perfectly okay for a great power (controlled by the Game Master) to shove something down the throat of a character (controlled by the player).

The difference may not always be obvious to the players (in fact, judging from the common grumbling about dictatorial GMs, it almost never is). It's the Game Master who has to be crystal clear about the difference. Otherwise

player hostility can reach the point of destroying a campaign.

Many writers have the same problem. They use their characters as game pieces in their stories. For example, when such a character is presented with a quest, the character suddenly wants to go on the quest. It's as if there were nothing in the character's life that ever mattered quite so much as that damn quest.

Compare that kind of zombie behavior with Zelazny's reluctant characters. As Merlin says, when handed commands from Logrus-on-High, "That's only if I take this whole business seriously..."

See, Zelazny-as-Game-Master understands that Merlin isn't necessarily going to be a happy player in any "Great Game." Sure, Zelazny-as-Game-Master (Maybe that should be abbreviated 'ZaGM?' Or maybe not...) has the Logrus, and the Pattern, and the elder Amberites, and the Lords of House Sawall, all pushing Merlin around mercilessly. But Merlin himself is left free to play as he wishes.

The shape of a Unicorn, like Blake's Tyger, burning bright, took form, so painful to behold that I had to look away.

I shifted my gaze to the deep, cool blackness, but there was no rest for my eyes in that place either. Something stirred within the darkness, and there came another sound—a grating, as of metal being scraped on stone. This was followed by a powerful hissing. The ground trembled again. Curved lines flowed forward. Even before the brightness of the Unicorn etched its lineaments within that mighty gloom, I realized it was the head of a one-eyed serpent which had come partway into the chapel. I shifted my gaze to a point between them, catching each within my peripheral vision. Far better than any attempt to behold either directly. I felt their gazes upon me, the Unicorn of Order and the Serpent of Chaos. It was not a pleasant feeling, and I retreated until the altar was at my back.

Both came slightly farther into the chapel. The Unicorn's head was lowered, horn pointed directly at me. The Serpent's tongue darted in my direction.

"Uh, if either of you want this armor and stuff," I ventured, "I certainly have no object—"

The Serpent hissed and the Unicorn raised a hoof and let it fall, cracking the floor of the chapel, the fracture line racing toward me like a streak of black lightning and halting just at my feet.

"On the other hand," I observed, "no insult is intended by the offer, Your Eminences—"

Wrong thing to say—again, Frakir interjected, weakly.

Tell me what's right, I said, trying for a mental sotto voce.

I don't—Oh!

The Unicorn reared; the Serpent drew itself upward. I dropped to my knees and looked away, their gazes having somehow become physically painful. I was trembling,

and all of my muscles had begun to ache.

It is suggested, Frakir recited, that you play the game the way it is set up.

What metal entered my backbone I know not. But I raised my head and turned it, looking first to the Serpent, then to the Unicorn. Though my eyes watered and ached as if I were trying to stare down the sun, I managed the gesture.

"You can make me play," I said, "but you cannot make me choose. My will is my own. I will guard this armor all night, as is required of me. In the morning I will go on without it because I do not choose to wear it."

Without it you may die, Frakir stated, as if translating.

I shrugged.

"If it is my choice to make, I choose not to place one of you before the other."

A rush of wind blew hot and cold past me, seemed a cosmic sigh.

You will choose, Frakir relayed, **whether you become aware of it or not. Everyone does. You are simply being asked to formalize your choice.**

"What's so special about my case?" I asked.

Again that wind.

Yours is a dual heritage, combined with great power.

"I never wanted either of you for an enemy," I stated.

Not good enough, came the reply.

"Then destroy me now."

The game is already in progress.

"Then let's get on with it," I answered.

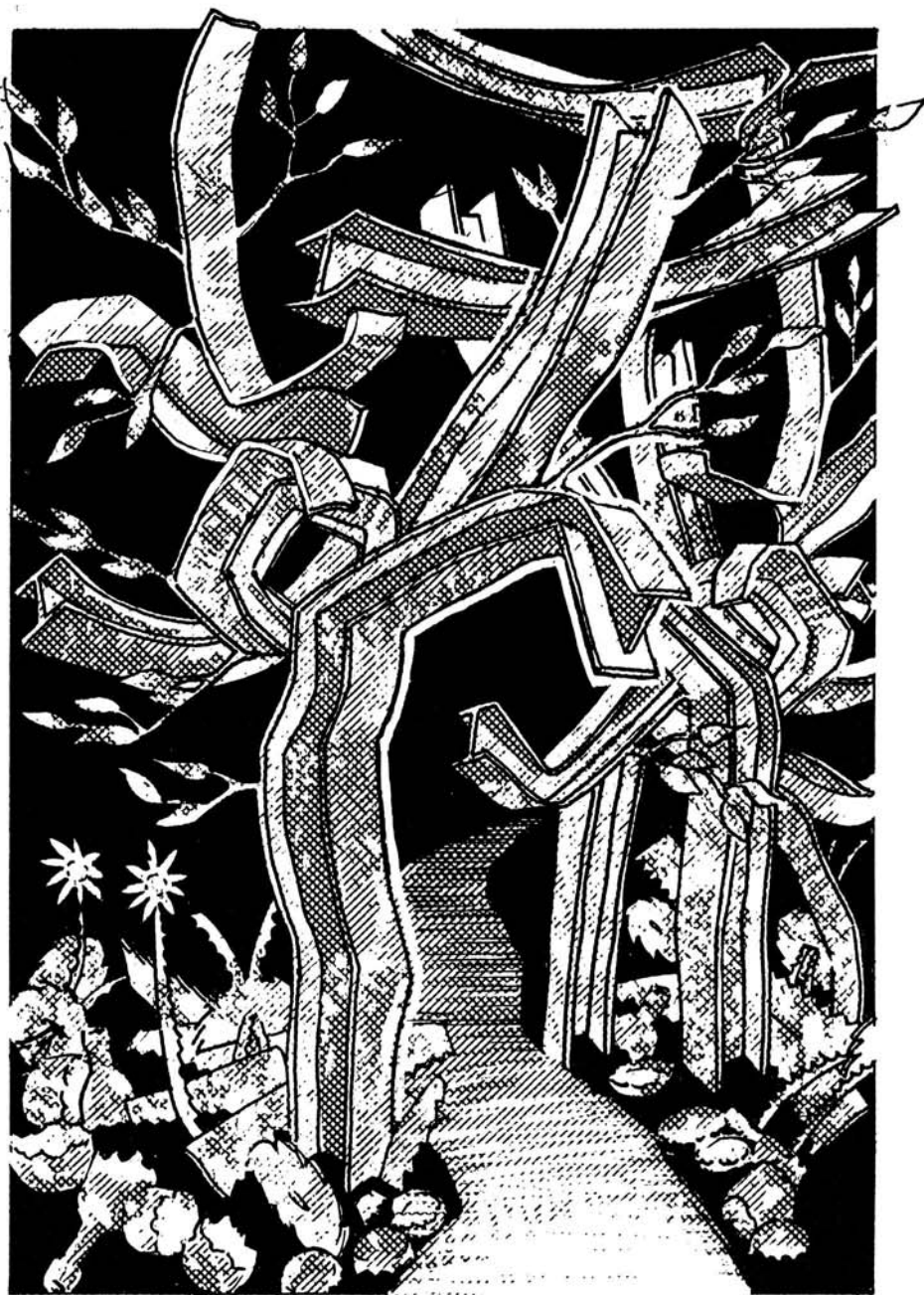
We are not pleased with your attitude.

"Vice versa," I answered.

The thunderclap that followed left me unconscious.

The reason I felt I could afford total honesty was a strong hunch that players for this game might be hard to come by.

Frakir & Merlin,
in *Knight of Shadows*



Role-Playing Elder Amberites

Good as Zelazny-as-Game-Master is at designing campaigns and stories, he's even better at running the non-player characters.

Even the littlest walk-on part, when a character just shows up to deliver a simple piece of information, is given Zelazny-as-Game-Master's full attention. He takes the trouble to make each minor character real.

For example, rather than have Merlin searching through the burnt wreckage of Victor Melman's Warehouse, a kid shows up with some information.

Why a kid? Well, kids like to watch fires and fire trucks, they love rummaging around in places where they don't belong, and most any kid is going to be fascinated with loose bullets. Plus, it gives a chance for some good

role-playing.

What Zelazny-as-Game-Master does with the casual characters is nothing compared to what he does with elder Amberites, and other immortals.

Not only are the elder Amberites frighteningly capable, they also have unexpected reserves of charm. Just about every time we come across one of Oberon's kids, they're showing off a new side of themselves, whether it's Benedict's slapstick sense of humor, or Flora's purse grenades.

So, it's worth revisiting Zelazny-as-Game-Master's treatment of the elders, for a refresher course in role-playing...

ELDERS AMBERITES, PART I THE ART OF SAYING NOTHING

I raised my coffee cup again. I had been about to say, "No, of course not. This is the first I've heard of the notion." Then I recalled my father's telling me how he had duped Aunt Flora into giving him vital information his amnesia had washed away. It was not the cleverness with which he had done it that had impressed me so much as the fact that his mistrust of relatives transcended consciousness, existed as a pure existential reflex. Not having been through all the family rivalries Corwin had, I lacked responses of such intensity. And Mandor and I had always gotten along particularly well, even though he was a few centuries older and had very different tastes in some areas. But, suddenly, discussing such a high-stakes matter as we were, that small voice Corwin referred to as his worse if wiser self, suggested, "Why not? You could use the practice, kid," and as I lowered the cup again I decided to try it out, just to see how it felt, for a few minutes.

"I don't know whether we both have the same thing in mind," I said. "Why don't you tell me about the middle game—or perhaps even the opening—for what you see rushing to conclusion now."

Prince of Chaos

There's a certain magical rhythm to the speech of the elder Amberites, also shared with their cousins out in the Courts of Chaos. It's a musical language rich in potential and threat and promise, but sparse when it comes to specifics.

The rules of the verbal game are simple. Say little of substance. Imply much. Ask about generalities, and speak in pleasantries.

For example, notice how interesting it is to refer to people by characteristics rather than by name. Ask after "your dark friend," or "he who seems to have swallowed too much power," or "our cousin in need," and the responses may be surprising, revealing something, or someone, quite unexpected.

Game terminology can be quite effective. Merlin asks about "the middle game," but such phrases as "the latest feint," "their sacrifice move," "a powerful gambit," and "so, what do you think lies behind door number three?"

As Game Master, it's often a good idea, and very good practice, to have the non-player characters accept the verbal terms offered by the player characters. If a player starts by mentioning "cost" or "trade," then stick to mercantile terms, replying with "our stock seems to have fallen," "the risk factor seems high, but matches your profit potential," and "my merchandise seems to be appreciating in value." Medical, legal, military, or even carpentry metaphors are equally valid.

If done properly, a conversation about the most trivial of topics can take on more sinister meaning than the shouting of curses and threats.

"...Mandor," she went on. "What happened to your arm?"

"A misunderstanding involving some architecture," he replied. "You've been out of sight, though hardly out of mind, for some time."

"Thank you, if that's a compliment," she said. "Yes, I go a bit reclusive every now and then, when the weight of society becomes troublesome. Though you're hardly the one to talk, sir, vanishing for long stretches as you do in the labyrinths of Mandorways—if that be indeed where you take yourself."

He bowed.

"As you say, lady, we appear to be creatures of a kind."

Her eyes narrowed, though her voice was unchanged, as she said, "I wonder. Yes, I can sometimes see us as kindred spirits, perhaps even more than in our simplest cycles of activity. We've both been out and about a lot of late, though, haven't we?"

"But I've been careless," said Mandor, indicating his injured arm. "You, obviously, have not."

"I never argue with architecture," she said.

"Or other imponderables?" he asked.

"I try to work with what is in place," she told him.

"Generally, I do, too."

"And if you cannot?" she asked.

He shrugged.

"Sometimes there are collisions."

"You've survived many in your time, haven't you?"

"I can't deny it, but then it has been a long while. You seem made of very survivable stuff yourself."

"So far," she responded. "We really must compare notes on imponderables and collisions one day. Wouldn't it be strange if we were similar in all respects?"

"I should be very much surprised," he answered.

I was fascinated and slightly frightened by the exchange, though I could go only by feeling and had no notion of specifics. They were somehow similar, and I'd never heard generalities delivered with quite that precision and emphasis outside of Amber, where they often make a game of talking that way.

Dara and Mandor, in Prince of Chaos

ELDER AMBERITES, PART II

SHADES OF TRUTH

If you had a choice between the ability to detect a falsehood and the ability to discover truth, which one would you take? There was a time when I thought they were different ways of saying the same thing, but I no longer believe that. Most of my relatives, for example, are almost as good at seeing through subterfuge as they are at perpetrating it. I'm not at all sure, though, that they care much about truth. On the other hand, I'd always felt there was something noble, special, and honorable about seeking truth—a thing I'd attempted with Ghostwheel. Mandor had made me wonder, though. Had this made me a sucker for truth's opposite?

Sign of Chaos

Elder Amberites don't lie. They just obscure the truth to the point where it's unrecognizable.

As a Game Master role-playing an elder Amberite it's always better to leave out facts, to answer a question with a question, or to bring up something interesting, but unrelated, rather than to tell an outright fib.

Another favorite technique is speculation. All the elder Amberites love this game, where they chip in their own theories about what is really going on, who is behind the latest nastiness, and how everything makes perfect sense if you just assume that so-and-so is behind it all. And, if they can manage to point the finger of suspicion away from themselves, and over to one of their rivals, so much the better.

After all, it's not like they aren't telling the truth. As they say, it's just a theory, just another attempt to fit together the known facts.

...before I realized it, I was telling her about my father—how this man I barely knew had rushed through a massive story of his struggles, his dilemmas, his decisions, as if he were trying to justify himself to me, as if that were the only opportunity he might have to do it, and how I had listened, wondering what he was editing, what he had forgotten, what he might be glossing over or dressing up, what his feelings were toward me...

Merlin, in *Sign of Chaos*

ELDER AMBERITES, PART III

ANCIENT ELDER AMBERITES

And then there was Dworkin, squinting at me from out of a tiny mirror with a twisted frame.

"Nothing to be alarmed about," he remarked, "but all sorts of imponderables are hovering about you."

"What am I to do?" I cried.

"You must become something greater than yourself."

"I don't understand."

"Escape the cage that is your life."

"What cage?"

He was gone.

Prince of Chaos

"...On reflection, it always became clear," he said.

"Reflection..." I said, and I looked into the pool.

Images swam amid the black ribbons beneath its surface—Swayvill lying in state, yellow and black robes muffling his shrunken form, my mother, my father, demonic forms, all passing and fading, Jurt, myself, Jasra and Julia, Random and Fiona, Mandor and Dworkin, Bill Roth and many faces I did not know...

I shook my head.

"Reflection does not clarify," I said.

"It is not the function of an instant," he replied.

Prince of Chaos

Eh? Say again?

Does even Zelazny know the meaning of this?

Maybe, maybe not. Perhaps it's an indicator of just how cuckoo Dworkin has become, or maybe, just maybe, it's a real pointer.

As if the standard cast of elder Amberites weren't cryptic enough, Zelazny-as-Game-Master also provides the next generation more aged. If people like Fiona and Llewella seem obtuse, Dworkin and Suhuy are alien.

From the point of view of the Game Master, it's as if they've taken the conversational techniques of the elder Amberites one step farther along the path of obscurity.

Not only do they seem incapable of saying anything straight, but they've increased the subtlety of their communication to the point of mysticism.

ELDER AMBERITES, PART IV

THE ART OF SUSPICION

"For centuries the personal vendetta has been our way of settling disagreements, not necessarily proceeding inevitably to death—though that was always a possibility—but certainly characterized by intrigues, to the end of embarrassing, disadvantaging, maiming, or exiling the other and enhancing one's own position. This reached its latest peak in the scramble for the succession. I thought everything was pretty much settled, though, when I wound up with the job, which I certainly wasn't looking for. I had no real axes to grind, and I've tried to be fair. I know how touchy everyone here is. I don't think it's me, though, and I don't think it's the succession. I haven't had any bad vibes from any of the others. I'd gotten the impression they had decided I was the lesser of all possible evils and were actually cooperating to make it work. No, I don't believe any of the others is rash enough to want my crown. There was actually amity, good-will, after the succession was settled. But what I'm wondering now is whether the old pattern might be recurring—that some of the others might have taken up the old game again to settle personal grievances. I really don't want to see that happen—all the suspicion, precautions, innuendoes, mistrust, double dealings. It weakens us, and there's always some possible threat or other against which we should be strong. Now, I've spoken with everyone privately, and of course they all deny any knowledge of current cabals, intrigues, and vendettas, but I could see that they're getting suspicious of each other. It's become a habit of thought. And it wasn't at all difficult for them to dig up some old grudge each of the others might still have had against Caine, despite the fact that he saved all our asses by taking out Brand. And the same with Bleys—everyone could find motives for everyone else."

"So you want the killer fast, because of what he's done to morale?"

"Certainly. I don't need all this backbiting and grudge-hunting. It's all still so close to the surface that we're likely to have real cabals, intrigues, and vendettas before long, if we don't already, and some little misunderstanding could lead to violence again."

"Do you think it's one of the others?"

"Shit! I'm the same as they are. I get suspicious by reflex. It may well be, but I haven't really seen a bit of evidence."

"Who else could it be?"

He uncrossed and recrossed his legs. He took another drink of wine.

"Hell! Our enemies are legion. But most of them wouldn't have the guts. They all know the kind of reprisal they could expect once we found them out."

Random & Merlin
in *Trumps of Doom*

Aside from their conversational quirks, the elder Amberites have developed suspicion to a high art. After all, from their point of view, this whole "Peaceful Reign of King Random" might be an elaborate feint, a set-up designed to sucker them into letting down their guard.

Their suspicion should extend everywhere, and to everyone. Each player character is, clearly, a potential pawn being used by one or another of their relatives. A cry for help could easily be the bait of a trap. Even death is no excuse for an elder Amberite to relax—after all, they've seen the dead return plenty of times.

DANGEROUS? IS IT DANGEROUS? YOU BET IT'S DANGEROUS!

On a sudden inspiration I sought through all my pockets, should I have even a chip of blue stones upon my person. Its odd vibrational abilities might just somehow conduct me through Shadow back toward its source. But no. Not even a speck of blue dust remained. They all were in my father's tomb, and that was it. It would have been too easy an out for me, I guess.

Knight of Shadows

That's so nasty.

For most of the first three books Merlin wanders around with at least a couple of chunks of Tragolith. He's even spent a couple of weeks in an enormous cave made entirely out of the stuff, crunching an unlimited supply of blue stone chips underfoot.

Merlin eventually discovers that the blue stones

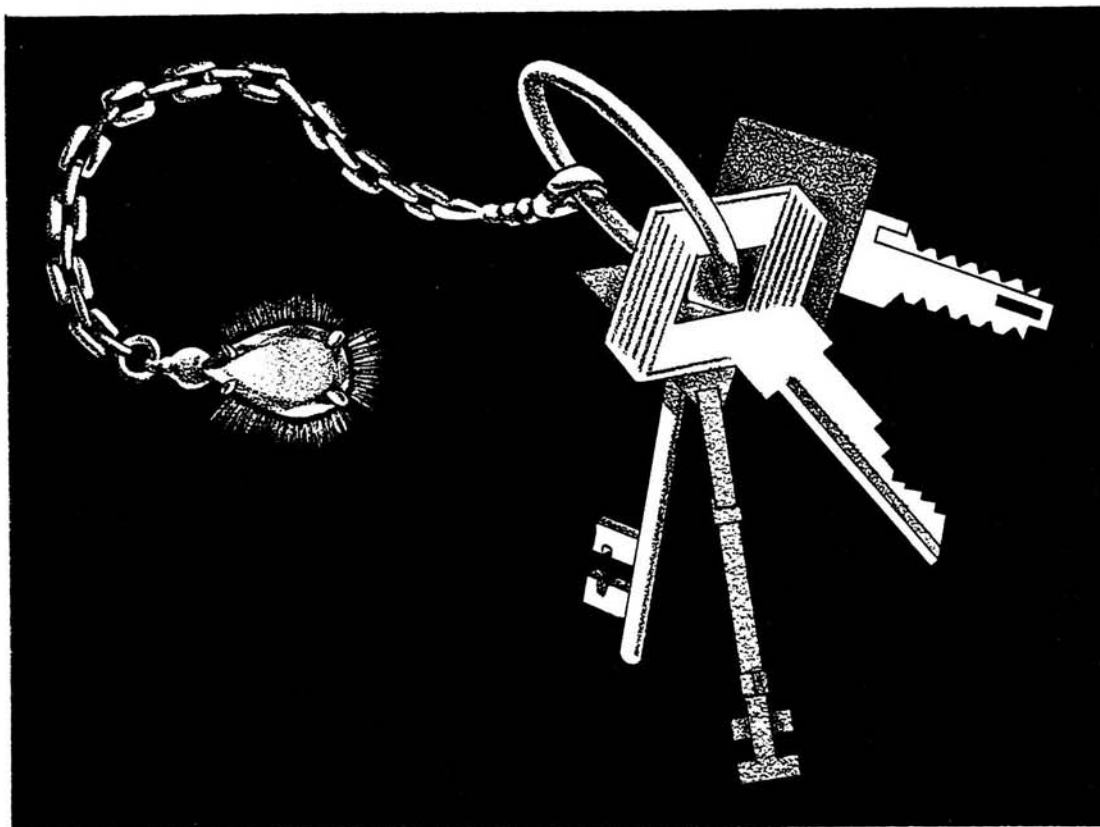
are sort of a combination "murder me" sign pasted on his back, and Shadow-wide radio tracking collar. Worse, just by carrying the stones around in his pocket, Merlin has become indelibly marked with the assassin-attraction effect.

So, no sooner does he find out just what the Tragoliths can do, Merlin dumps every fleck, and then walks the Pattern to flush away their contaminating influence.

Yes, Merlin made very sure he was clean.

Which gave Zelazny-as-Game-Master the perfect opportunity, a little while later, when Merlin was really stuck, to say, "you know, if you've got a spare piece of that blue stuff, you could probably get out of there..."

In other words, by stressing the side-effects, it's possible to get the player characters themselves to remove loose ends from a campaign.



TRUST

Every aspect of role-playing is based on trust. The players have to trust the Game Master to run things fairly, and to present a story that will be worthwhile. The Game Master has to trust the players to commit to the campaign, and to role-play honestly and well.

Another aspect of trust for each Game Master is learning to trust yourself. In order to become a better Game Master you have to take chances, and you have to experiment.

Which means you have to fail, at least occasionally. If you never fail, if every session goes smoothly, then something is terribly wrong. You aren't taking enough chances, and you're unlikely to ever breakthrough into the unexpected.

In other words, you've got to learn to trust yourself as a Game Master, even as you step into the unknown.

TRUST YOURSELF, PART I GO WITH THE FLOW

That's life: Trust and you're betrayed; don't trust and you betray yourself.

Knight of Shadows

There's an old saying that goes, "no military strategy, no matter how well thought out, ever survives contact with the enemy."

A Game Master should learn to say, "no story-line, no matter how well designed, ever survives contact with the player characters."

Usually an author has an advantage over a Game Master. The author's characters usually behave themselves, go where they're told, show up on time, and read the lines they're given.

That's not exactly what a Game Master can expect from player characters. Instead of predictable and reliable, players are devious and arbitrary. They don't behave. No matter how much time a Game Master spends analyzing all the possible outcomes and solutions for a situation, it's almost guaranteed that the players will come up with something outrageous and unexpected.

There are, however, a few times when the Game Master has the upper hand.

One of my favorites is based on Merlin's experiences when he's hiding out in a cave.

First Dworkin comes calling. Except it isn't really Dworkin. Then Oberon shows up, but Merlin has already learned his lesson from the fake Dworkin, so he's not about to trust somebody disguised as his dead grandfather.

Finally, when we get to the third visitor, Corwin, Merlin absolutely knows he's dealing with a phony. Merlin is ready to shoot first and ask questions later.

As it turns out, that's Merlin's big mistake.

There's a rhyme to this episode. A three-part beat. It goes, "Lie, lie, tell the truth."

As a Game Master, all you've got to do is watch the player character. What does it take to get that player to be distrustful? How many times do they need burning before they're shy of fire? Or, conversely, how many times do they need to be befriended before they become trusting?

It doesn't have to be in threes. Sometimes you only need one lie, sometimes you can start with the truth, sometimes you'll need four or more before the characters is jaded enough.

The point is, don't expect the player characters to react according to plan. Not only will you be disappointed, but you'll also miss out on a great deal of fun.

Instead, anticipate the unexpected, by rolling with each sequence of events. Build on the changes, and you'll find that abandoning a plan is not a bad thing.

TRUST YOURSELF, PART II

DON'T FEAR GIVING POWER

"What the hell's a spikard?"

So I told him that story, too.

"That's why you were so flashy back in the church when you were fighting with Jurt?" he said.

"That's right."

"Let's see it."

I tried to pull it off, but it wouldn't pass the knuckle. So I simply extended my hand. Luke reached for it. His fingers halted a couple of inches above it.

"It's holding me off, Merle. Protective little devil."

"Hell," I said, "I'm not a shapeshifter for nothing." I took hold of it then, slimmed my finger suddenly, and slid it off. "Here."

He held it in the palm of his left hand as we bounced along, regarded it through narrowed eyes. Suddenly, I felt dizzy. Withdrawal symptoms from the thing? I forced myself upright, reversed my breathing, refused to let it show.

"Heavy," Luke said at last. "I can feel the power there. Other things, too. It won't let me in, though."

I reached for it and he drew his hand away.

"I can feel it in the air all around us," he said.

"Merle, this thing lays a spell on anybody who wears it."

I shrugged.

"Yes," I said. "A benign one, though. It's done nothing to harm me, and it's helped me a number of times."

"But can you trust anything that came to you in such an odd way—almost by trickery, caused you to abandon Frakir when she tried to warn you about it, and for all you knew has been influencing your behavior ever since you put it on?"

"I admit to a kind of disorientation at first," I said, "but I think that was just in the way of accommodation to the levels of voltage it draws. I've been back to normal for some time now."

"How can you tell for sure? Maybe it's brainwashed you."

"Do I seem brainwashed to you?"

"No. I was just trying to say that I wouldn't completely trust anything with such questionable credentials."

"Well taken," I agreed, holding forth my hand.

"But so far the benefits have outweighed any hypothetical dangers. Consider me warned, and I'll take my chances."

He handed it back.

"If I think it's making you act weird I'm going to hit you over the head and pull it off, though."

"Fair enough," I said, slipping it back on. Immediately, I felt a rush of energy throughout my system as the lines of control were reestablished.

Prince of Chaos

Zelazny-as-Game-Master's strategy is simple. When the characters want power, give it to 'em. Tons of it. So much power that they are overwhelmed. Enough power to get the player characters in serious trouble. He even hands out enough power to seriously threaten the balance of the universe.

Why not?

Power is what it's all about, really.

The fun thing is when the player characters start picking up handfuls of power without stopping to look at the price tags. Because, after all, there is always a price to be paid. For example, every power given to the player characters justifies another increase in the threat level.

Consider the following drawbacks for the player characters, each of which could be considered good things for the Game Master.

First, access to more power will alarm the character's enemies. A likely response is that the meanies in the campaign will be much more careful about organizing any attacks.

Second, big powers tend to attract big power collectors. Merlin hasn't seen this happen just yet, but the larger the crowd that learns of his spikards, the more likely it is that spikard collectors, and those who would like to see the spikards destroyed, will come looking.

Third, old powers come with some kind of history. Since there are plenty of indicators that the spikards represent "ancient powers," it seems likely that Merlin will find himself involved in even more conflicts.

Fourth, the bigger the power, the harder it is to control. In the case of the spikards Merlin has to deal with personality-altering imperatives, a protective field that resists removal, and some kind of addictive quality that makes him dependent on wearing a spikard. All that, and "lines of control" that could well be a two-way street.

Finally, consider the consequences of having a power and then losing it somehow. Having barely defended himself with a spikard, Merlin is going to feel very vulnerable without it.

"You must be careful what you wish for in this place," he told me in low and measured tones, "for wishes are sometimes granted here, and if the granter be depraved and read 'quietus' for your 'exit'—why, then, poof! you may cease to be. Up in smoke. Downward to the earth. Sideways to hell and gone."

Brand's Ghost, in *Knight of Shadows*

TRUST YOURSELF, PART III DON'T LIMIT YOUR PLAYERS

How did Zelazny-as-Game-Master's player characters fare?

Let's say we're looking at a group of five, including Merlin, Luke, Jurt, Julia, and, someone who joined the campaign a little later on, Coral. It makes sense, since each has a sort of innocence that we associate with player characters, and lacks most of that "seen it, done it, already know everything," feeling you get from elder Amberites and Game Master pawns.

Merlin himself is ready to take the throne of the Courts of Chaos, is attuned to the Jewel of Judgement, carries not one, but two Spikards, and has mastery over every known power. He managed to come to terms with every one of his known enemies. Plus, his own creation, Ghostwheel, seems to be making a name for itself as a third major power in the universe.

Luke ended up an initiate of the Pattern, a dabbler in magic, and a Trump Master. Politically, he now holds the throne of Kashfa, wears a ring symbolizing the protection of Queen Vialle, is married to the woman who bears the Jewel of Judgement, and has a very happy relationship with Nayda (who is possessed by a demon ty'iga). Luke holds the Trumps of Doom, his special Tragoliths, and has discovered father Brand's sword, Werewindle. If that weren't enough, Luke now has a friendly clone, his Pattern-Ghost Rinaldo, which either doubles his role-playing opportunities, or at least gives him a great excuse to be in two places at once.

Julia, starting from humble beginnings as a mere Shadow Earth dweller, has become a Sorceress and an Adept of the Broken Pattern. She has at least basic knowledge of Trump, the Fount of Power, Tragoliths, and other matters. She's even managed to land in House

Sawall, out in the Courts of Chaos, which gives her the opportunity to figure out more cool stuff, and maybe add on a couple of new powers.

Jurt, seemingly the campaign's main "Bad Stuff Guy," comes out strong. Starting with the basics, Logrus Mastery, Shape Shifting and Magic, he has since gained power from the Fount, but not so much power as to lose control of himself. Jurt also stands very close to inheriting the Throne of the Courts of Chaos. He has his hands on Brand's sword Werewindle, and he's been proven able to walk the Pattern (at least his Logrus-Ghost managed to walk the lines of a Broken Pattern). Add to that the fact that he's managed to befriend all his major enemies, including Merlin and Luke, and has done time defending Corwin's Pattern.

Coral, probably the late-comer to the campaign, seems solid enough, what with Pattern, some sort of magic, and goodly ranking across the board, highlighted in Warfare. By the end of the saga Coral has come away with the main artifact of the campaign, the Jewel of Judgement, implanted in her right eye. Plus, she has been crowned Queen of Kashfa. Plus, she is carrying a child, Merlin's, who is likely the heir to both the thrones of Amber and Chaos.

In other words, everybody did very well.

Zelazny-as-Game-Master didn't skimp. He wasn't afraid that the characters would gain too much, become too strong, or get out of control. That's because there are always new and bigger challenges and tougher problems available. The universe can be made bigger, and that's always better than making the player characters smaller.

Rather than limit the player characters, Zelazny-as-Game-Master enlarged the campaign.

TRUST YOURSELF, PART IV

MISTAKES? GAME MASTERS DON'T MAKE MISTAKES!

"...How is Dara?"

"It's been a long time since I've seen her for more than a few moments," I answered. "She is still peremptory, arrogant, and over-solicitous when it comes to me. I get the impression, too, that she may be involved in local political scheming as well as aspects of the larger relationship between the Courts and Amber."

"...It's likely," Corwin said. "I never understood her, you know. She came to me out of nowhere at a strange time in my life, she lied to me, we became lovers, she walked the Pattern in Amber, and she vanished. It was like a bizarre dream. It was obvious that she used me. For years I thought that it was only to get knowledge of the Pattern and access to it. But I've had a lot of time for reflection recently, and I'm no longer certain that that was the case."

"Oh?" I said. "What, then?"

"You," he replied. "More and more I'm coming to think, what she really wanted was to bear a son or daughter of Amber."

I felt myself grow cold. Could the reason for my own existence have been such a calculated thing? Had there been no affection at all? Had I been intentionally conceived to serve some special purpose? I did not at all like the notion...

Corwin's Pattern Ghost & Merlin,
in *Prince of Chaos*

Hah, say the skeptics, it's obvious that Zelazny-as-Game-Master is losing it! He's forgotten that Corwin already told Merlin about Dara's purpose in conceiving Merlin.

Well, "Hah" yourself.

First off, this isn't Corwin. This is a Pattern Ghost of Corwin, created by Corwin's Pattern, from the one and only time that Corwin walked that Pattern. Which means that the Pattern Ghost knows nothing of the end of the Patternfall War, nothing of the later encounters with Dara, and certainly does not know the details of the long story told father to son.

As for Merlin, don't forget that he still wears the Spikard, and that he is a long way from being able to trust his own memories. After all, he can't even remember becoming attuned to the Jewel of Judgement.

The point here is that Zelazny-as-Game-Master isn't a slave to his own words. Rather than timidly checking for constancy in every act, he's willing to have things happen that might seem contradictory. Nor does he apologize, or even explain inconsistencies.

Instead, as any good Game Master, when a supposed error is discovered, when characters protest that things don't make sense, Zelazny-as-Game-Master says, "wait and see," or, "perhaps, perhaps not," or "possible..."

Any Amber campaign is too rich in possibilities for the limits of mere logic to apply. There's always the chance that someone, or something, is deliberately altering things, or changing the rules.

TRUST YOURSELF, PART V

DON'T LIMIT YOUR IMAGINATION

I dug out my Trumps, located the one I had done for Ghostwheel, bright circle.

I regarded it with some intensity, but it was slow to grow cool. This was understandable, considering some of the odd areas of space to which this hall gave access. Also, it was irritating.

I raised the spikard. Using it here at the level I intended would be like setting off a burglar alarm. Amen.

I touched the Tarot with a line of subtle force, attempting to enhance the instrument's sensitivity. I maintained my concentration.

Again, nothing.

I backed it with more force. There followed a perceptible cooling. But there was no contact.

"Ghost," I said through clenched teeth. "This is important. Come to me."

No reply. So I sent power into the thing. The card began to glow and frost crystals formed upon it. Small cracking sounds occurred in its vicinity.

"Ghost," I repeated.

A weak sense of his presence occurred then, and I poured more juice into the card. It shattered in my hand, and I caught it in a web of forces and held all of the pieces together, looking like a small stained-glass window. I continued to reach through it.

Prince of Chaos

Zelazny-as-Game-Master could be boring, saying, for the umpteenth time, "there's no answer." After all, he said it lots of times, all through the Merlin Saga. Still, he knows it doesn't have to be the same every time. No way!

If the player character wants to push it, really stressing that attempt at Trump contact, why not shatter the card? Or have crackle with sparks and then short out? Or have the image suddenly fog over and fade away?

Think about it. Wouldn't it be fun to play with a Game Master where these kinds of neat things can happen?

Consider the following:

GM: *There's no answer. Do you want to keep pushing the contact?*

Player: *Yeah, I'll give it the works. Psyche, a Power Word boost, and an image of the Pattern if I can manage it.*

GM: *You do all that, and... Wow! Something happened. You hear the card give off a 'pop' and suddenly your hand is wet.*

Player: *Wet? What do you mean? Do I have an underwater Trump contact or something?*

GM: *Nope. There's no sense of Trump at all. In fact, it seems like the card is broken, because it's lost all its normal coldness. The liquid is dripping, and your shirt sleeve is wet all the way to the elbow.*

Player: *I don't get it. What liquid?*

GM: *You're not exactly sure. Could it be that Trump cards run on Trump fluid? You've got about a quart of a multi-colored mixture staining your shirt, and splattered on your shoes.*

Player: *Trump liquid?!?!?*

GM: *Sure. Say, I think this one's totally drained. I guess you'll have to take it for Dworkin for a refill...*

Hey, you could at least try holding your nose and play whiny telephone operator: "I'm sorry, there is no answer at that number..."

TRUST YOURSELF, PART VI

LISTEN TO YOUR INSTINCTS

...A bird appeared overhead in full flight, cawing raucously, vanishing again before it had passed the entire length of the room.

Page 22, in *Prince of Chaos*

It erupted from the card into my face, with a beating of black wings, cawing, crow or raven, black, black.

"Forbidden!" it cried. "Forbidden! Go back! Withdraw!"

It flapped about my head as the cards spilled from my hand.

"Stay away!" it screeched, circling the room. "Forbidden place!"

It passed out the doorway and I pursued it. It seemed to have vanished, though, in the moments it was lost to my sight.

"Bird!" I cried. "Come back!"

But there was no reply, no further sounds of beating wings. I peered into the other rooms and there was no sign of the creature in any of them.

Page 56, in *Prince of Chaos*

This book, and the earlier one, are based entirely on Roger Zelazny's written work, and not on any conversations or consultations with the author.

However, if you ever have the pleasure of making Mr. Zelazny's acquaintance, you will discover that he is a deeply intuitive character. His subconscious and his unconscious boil and seethe with ideas, memories, *non sequiturs*, and what can only be called the bizarre.

In writing, when a thought occurs to Roger, he trusts himself. Rather than chase down and analyze the notions that present themselves, he trusts that they will eventually make sense.

Take a look at the example of the black bird.

When first visiting Suhuy, Merlin sees the bird pass by. A strange enough sight that he comments upon it.

Thirty-four pages later, in attempting to reach his lost father, he lets loose the black bird of warning. It immediately disappears, and Merlin, with all his power, seems unable to locate it.

Coincidence?

Maybe.

Or, more probably, a neat bit of Game Master's work.

Zelazny-as-Game-Master is wonderful at setting up this kind of weird back-looping. Sort of a time traveller's foreshadowing. He also, very likely, did it intuitively. First showing the bird, without knowing why, and then, later on, seeing the connection that could explain the earlier sighting.

TRUST YOURSELF, PART VII

FINAL LESSON

What follows is a masterful piece of work.

Zelazny-as-Game-Master does two things here, and he does them wonderfully well.

The second thing Zelazny-as-Game-Master does, is keep his mouth shut. Merlin walks away from this encounter with Julia without suspecting how badly he's messed up. Zelazny-as-Game-Master never explains what Merlin did wrong, never explains how Merlin messed up.

Now for the first thing...

"Okay, Merle. What's the score?" she asks.

"I don't know what game you're talking about, Julia."

"Don't get cute. All I want's a straight answer."

"What's the question?"

"That place you took me, from the beach, that night... Where was it?"

"It was—sort of a dream."

"Bullshit!" She turns sideways to face me fully, and I must meet those flashing eyes without my face giving anything away. "I've been back there, several times, looking for the way we took. There is no cave. There's nothing! What happened to it? What's going on?"

"Maybe the tide came in and—"

"Merle! What kind of idiot do you take me for? That walk we took isn't on the maps. Nobody

around here's ever heard of anything like those places. It was geographically impossible. The times of day and the seasons kept shifting. The only explanation is supernatural or paranormal—whatever you want to call it. What happened? You owe me an answer and you know it. What happened? Where were you?"

I look away, past my feet, past the flowers.

"I—can't say."

"Why not?"

"I—" What could I say? It was not only that telling her of Shadow would disturb, perhaps destroy, her view of reality. At the heart of my problem lay the realization that it would also require telling her how I knew this, which would mean telling her who I am, where I am from, what I am—and I was afraid to give her this knowledge. I told myself that it would end our relationship as surely as telling her nothing would; and if it must end either way, I would rather we parted without her possessing this knowledge. Later, much later, I was to see this for the rationalization it was; my real reason for denying her the answers she desired was that I was not ready to trust her, or anyone, so close to me as I really am. Had I known her longer, better—another year, say—I might have answered her. I don't know. We never used the word "love," though it must have run through her mind on occasion, as it did through mine. It was, I suppose, that I didn't love her enough to trust her, and then it was too late. So, "I can't tell you," were my words.

"You have some power that you will not share."

"Call it that, then."

"I would do whatever you say, promise whatever you want promised."

"There is a reason, Julia."

She is on her feet, arms akimbo. "And you won't even share that."

I shake my head.

"It must be a lonely world you inhabit, magician, if even those who love you are barred from it."

At that moment it seems she is simply trying her last trick for getting an answer from me. I screw my resolve yet tighter. "I didn't say that."

"You didn't have to. It is your silence that tells me. If you know the road to Hell too, why not head that way? Good-bye!"

"Julia. Don't..."

She chooses not to hear me.

A great lesson can be learned here.

In the last four lines of dialog, what did Merlin say?

More important, what did Julia hear?

Are you sure?

Read it again.

Julia said, "It must be a lonely world you inhabit, magician, if even those who love you are barred from it."

"I didn't say that," was Merlin's reply.

For Julia, that was the final straw.

Merlin, when he said, "I didn't say that," thought he was saying something like, "I didn't mean you're barred from my world." Or maybe he thought he was saying, "I didn't say those I love are barred from my world."

He isn't paying attention.

Merlin says they never used the word love, but he just heard Julia say, "those who love you..." That's the kind of cautious wording a person would use if they were very much afraid of getting their feelings crushed.

When Merlin says, "I didn't say that," what does Julia hear? Zelazny-as-Game-Master puts himself in Julia's place, feels as she feels, hurts as she hurts, and hears what Julia hears.

Julia put herself on the line, she admitted her love. She said, "...if even those who love you are barred..."

When Merlin said, "I didn't say that," Julia knows herself to be barred from his life. In his words she hears, "I didn't say I loved you..."



DEMONS

You can't buy a demon.
Rent one, maybe.

Certainly you can coerce one, if you've got the power to do so. Or you can try to talk a demon into doing something.

After all, demons are intelligent and independent creatures, possessing abilities of Shape Shifting and other magic. In a lot of cases, the difference between a demon and a Lord of Chaos is difficult to spot (a source of occasional embarrassment for visitors to the Courts of Chaos). It could be that the people of the Courts of Chaos are merely a more successful breed of demon, the dominant species in that insane ecosystem. Or perhaps demons are truly the fey offspring of the Lords of Chaos, the descendants of various Creatures of Blood, formed through the power of Shape Shifting.

Regardless of their origins, demons are now an essential part of life in the Courts of Chaos. Some are wild and untamed, living apart from society. Others have been in service for so long that they are indistinguishable from the members of their House. Still others enter into bargains, or are simply bound into servitude.

In other words, demons now serve as messengers, functionaries, guardians, warriors and, occasionally, assassins.

The variety of demonic races is astounding, from the ty'iga—bodiless spirits which inhabit the Abyss—to beings such as Merlin's old servant Kergma, described as a mathematical abstraction. Plus, of course, demons of every possible size, shape and degree of lethality. In fact, demons are so varied, it's easier to simply summon one according to your needs, rather than pick from those who are known.

DEMONS AS NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

The rules for demon creation are just for demons. The points don't translate into either character points or artifact & creature creation points.

For example, Demonic Shape Shift is just four (4) points. A similar power for a player character would be the thirty-five (35) point Shape Shift. For an artifact or creature it would be at least one or two steps above Limited Shape Shift, so either eight or sixteen points.

Demons are also full characters. As denizens of the Pit, or the Courts of Chaos, they are "real" rather than of Shadow. Player characters would no more know the

specific Attributes, Qualities, Powers or Multipliers of a demon, than they would for Dworkin or Caine. For that reason, among others, demon construction is for Game Masters only.

TRANSLATING POINTS INTO ROLE-PLAYING

Characters don't "buy" demons. However, the points are a useful way for the Game Master to figure out the value of demons. This can be roughly translated into how much time it takes to bind the demon, what it might expect in trade for its services, or how long it would take to negotiate a contract of servitude.

A Sample Demon.

All the examples, illustrating the various ways of getting and dealing with demons, are based on Braithwhit:

Braithwhit [10 Point Demon] - Like most of his demon race, the *Umvalic*, he's average in all his Attributes. Braithwhit has no weaknesses, and has a nice range of powers. He is also one of those capable of venturing away out into Shadow, towards Amber, without immediate harm. Socially, Braithwhit is one of the more common demons in the Courts of Chaos. Most of Braithwhit's extended family is in voluntary service to House Hendrake, for whom they provide guard and sentry duty.

Chaos Psyche [Zero Points]
Chaos Strength [Zero Points]
Chaos Endurance [Zero Points]
Chaos Warfare [Zero Points]
Impenetrable Armor [1 Point]
Deadly Damage Armament [1 Point]
Temporary Resistance to Order [2 Points]
Select Shadow [2 Points]
Blood Shape Shift [2 Points]
Magic Manipulation [2 Points]

SUMMONING DEMONS

Since artifacts and creatures are the stuff of Shadow, they can be created by Conjunction.

That's not the case with demons. Demons are "real," and contain something of Chaos, so Conjurers can only

**IMPORTANT
CRITICAL
VITAL
BIG-DEAL WARNING!**

**Demon creation is
not
for player characters.**

summon existing demons (on the other hand, it's possible to Conjure Shadow demons using the standard rules for creature creation—but they won't be true demons of Chaos).

It's also possible to summon demons through the use of magic spells, the Logrus, Trump, or other arcane means.

There are also grimoires, magical books, that describe rituals for summoning demons. While unreliable, especially compared to the methods used by Lords of Chaos, they do provide a way for Shadow dwellers to summon demons.

Summoning the Sample Demon.

Since Braithwhit is a ten point demon, it takes about ten hours of Complex Conjunction to bring him forth. That's assuming that the Conjuror isn't calling any demon in particular, but that Braithwhit happens to fit the Conjuror's general requirements.

If the Conjuror happens to know Braithwhit's name, it's possible to do the summoning in less than an hour.

CONTAINING DEMONS

Summoning a demon is one thing, getting them to stick around, or preventing them from attacking their host, is something else altogether.

Of course, if the Conjuror feels capable of handling the demon, either psychically, magically, or with a few strong-arm buddies, that's fine.

Containing a summoned demon in the inside of a pentagram is the traditional way of dealing with the situation.

Most characters can learn how to make a pentagram. After all, if you can find the right grimoire, it's as easy as following a brownie recipe. Even characters with no magical powers can build a pentagram. It's just that, lacking the sensitivity to magic that's given by Sorcery or Conjunction, there's no way of checking the work for errors.

There's also the little problem of exactly which pentagram, pentacle, pentangle, or pentalpha to use. You see, the pentagrammatic arts are filled with complications, and mutually contradictory rules and advice. Each pentagram is designed for a specific set of conditions, and can only be modified to a limited degree.

Making a "cookbook" pentagram can take several days of detailed work. Modifying the design of a known pentagram can take three or four times as long. And creating a totally new pentagram will usually involve at least a month of experimentation.

Here are just a few of the many pentagrammatic choices available:

Psyche Barrier.

Designed to keep the prisoner from messing around psychically with the pentagram, and to prevent psychic contact with outside forces. The problem is, it works two

ways, so the Conjuror can't psychically dominate the prisoner, any more than the prisoner can use Psyche to attack or call for help.

Magic Barrier.

Keeps the prisoner from using innate magical manipulation, or spells. This is especially important, since many demons can "unweave" pentacles from the inside. On the other hand, since magic can't come out, it's also impossible to send magic in, so the Conjuror can't use High Compelling, or any binding spells on the prisoner.

Chaos Barrier.

Since some demons are capable of evoking chaos, in the form of raw chaos, or as Logrus Tendrils, the pentagram can be made impervious to the forces of Chaos. However, this also means the prisoner is protected from being manipulated by Logrus Tendrils.

Pentagram Environment.

The Conjuror can specify the environment on the interior of the Pentagram. Other than choosing the temperature and humidity, the Conjuror can also specify whether the inside will be as Chaos-filled as the Courts of Chaos, or as stable as Castle Amber. Since some demons are sensitive to the realm of Order, they'll be more comfortable in a Chaos-laced Pentagram. On the other hand, certain demons can be weakened, and made easier to manipulate, by sticking them in a place with no Chaos energy.

Containing the Sample Demon.

A pentacle that could contain our sample demon, Braithwhit, would have to keep him from walking out through Shadow or manipulating the magic of the pentacle from inside.

Most pentagrams are designed for a single prisoner. Since Braithwhit can make creatures of his own blood, he would be able to attack the pentacle from different points, and could escape from pentagrams that aren't designed for multiple containment.

INVITING DEMONS

If a character has access to the Courts of Chaos, or any of the other demonic realms (sometimes called hells, or Hell Shadows), then using Conjunction to get a demon is unnecessary. After all, why spend all that time and effort, when all that's needed is a simple invitation?

Most of the Houses of the Courts of Chaos have plenty of demons on staff. Ask any one of them, and they'll be happy to chat about possible demon arrangements. If the deal looks lucrative, demons will tend to recommend their own relatives and allies. Even if it looks like a bad deal, there are plenty of out-of-work demons to choose from.

On the other hand, there's no reason not to talk about plans that involve binding or compelling. Most demons have plenty of enemies and rivals they'd be happy to see enslaved. They'll even supply names and give advice on appropriate rituals.

Inviting the Sample Demon.

Braithwhit considers himself a combat demon, and he'd be willing to entertain an offer of employment. Any polite invitation, especially one that involves a free meal, would be happily accepted.

ENTERTAINING DEMONS

Although it's certainly possible to contain an invited demon, tricking them into a pentagram, it's considered rude behavior in many circles.

There's a wide range of acceptable protocol for entertaining demons. If the host is unknown in the Courts of Chaos, it's a good idea to put on a lavish spread, complete with food and entertainment. On the other hand, if the host is a powerful Lord of Chaos, there's no reason to be so accommodating. Merely being brought into the presence of someone like Mandor is honor enough.

All this depends on relative status. Powerful demons, or those representing large groups, might expect a show of respect even from the King of the Courts of Chaos. On the other hand, there are plenty of low status demons who would be happy to get an offer from anybody.

Entertaining the Sample Demon.

Braithwhit, a fairly simple demon, doesn't really expect much. It would be an honor to come into the presence of any Lord of Chaos, even if he wasn't invited to sit down.

With someone unknown, Braithwhit would try to find out as much as possible before appearing. Since his family serves the Hendrakes, he'd expect at least common courtesy from someone looking for his services. It needn't be much, just the offer of a glass of wine and a few munchies.

On the other hand, if Braithwhit were invited as part of a group, he'd expect a bit more. If his servitude was as a member of a guard squadron (Named & Numbered), he'd expect a bit more of a formal setting.



DEALING WITH DEMONS

Once summoned, either by magical means or by simply arranging for an appointment, the deal-making starts. The objective is to get the demon into some condition of servitude.

Usually, demons are happy to enter servitude.

If treated well, a demon can develop a lot of loyalty. It will act on its own to aid you, will summon allies if need be to see that your welfare is taken care of, and will act as a companion, protector, and friend. The demon enjoys a personal rapport with you, and will offer information or services beyond the call of duty. If you are injured or killed, the demon will try to avenge you or at least recover your body for proper burial.

DICKERING FOR A DEMON'S SERVICES

A bargain with a demon is a trade where the demon agrees to some condition of servitude in exchange for some payment or reward.

Mere wealth, or mundane possessions, aren't going to cut it as demon payment. After all, they live in the Courts of Chaos, and most are capable of shifting shadow in some way or other. Instead, the character will have to offer something like the following:

Protection.

Some demons seek protection from their enemies, or even from others who might attempt to bind them into servitude. A promise of protection might be conditional on a particular threat, or for a specific period of time, or for a set number of acts.

Release.

Since it's so common for demons to be forced into servitude, it's often possible to trade a short-term service in exchange for releasing another condition of servitude.

Revenge.

Some demons will just flat-out refuse to deal, either demanding immediate release, or simply heading for the nearest exit. In such cases it's best to jump right to the most likely negotiation bait—revenge! Demons, being rather bloody minded, are always looking for interesting ways of correcting insults and slights. A period of servitude, in exchange for revenge against a powerful enemy, or even another demon, is often too good to resist.

Service.

If the demon is willing to enter into a condition of servitude, why not the other party?

Status.

Promises of things that will improve a demon's status in the Courts of Chaos won't fall on deaf ears. For example, being formally presented to the King of the Courts of Chaos is worth quite a bit. Demons can also be a bit egotistical, and are often eager to get a fancy title.

Items of Power.

Things containing real power, like Trump, or objects with Pattern or Logrus, are highly valued by demons. If a character can lay hands on a spikard, or something of comparable power, it can be traded for hundreds, or even thousands, of points worth of demonic servitude. However, most demons will recognize conjured or Shadow items as effectively valueless.

Knowledge.

Secrets are always good currency. This can involve details of powers, insider information on other characters, or forewarning of danger.

Bargaining for the Sample Demon.

Braithwhit is willing to listen to any reasonable offer. He doesn't feel like he needs personal protection, release, revenge or service, but he'd be willing to get such things on behalf of his family. Braithwhit doesn't have enough bargaining power to hope for Items of Power, and he's too low on the totem pole for knowledge to be worth all that much. On the other hand, he likes the idea of a rise in Status.

Offering Empowerment.

Another use for the points is showing just how much work it takes for a Conjurer to "improve" a demon. Since most demons are greedy to advance, and to become more powerful than their rivals, this is an excellent bargaining chip for servitude.

For example, it's possible to do either Conjure Shadow Shape, a fairly temporary condition, or Empowerment, which is more durable, on any willing demon. Any Attribute, Quality or Power can be increased, so long as the Conjurer spends the required time at the job.

Offering Empowerment to the Sample Demon.

Braithwhit would be interested in just about any augmentation, but he's most keen to improve his rank in Strength. Since neither the Conjurer or Braithwhit have any idea what it takes to move him up in the rankings, Braithwhit will try to bargain for as many hours of Empowerment as possible, claiming that demons, being already hideously strong, can only be made better by a

massive effort. A lot depends on how it's role-played, but ten hours (equal to his points, as it happens) would be a minimum for a single mission, and for higher levels of servitude, Braithwhit would expect even more.

BINDING DEMONS

Demons can also be forced into servitude, pushing servitude right down their throats. Usually the only reward offered to the demon is the promise of freedom.

Demons with this kind of relationship are notorious for being lazy and ill-tempered, and will often attempt to exploit loop-holes in the wording of their commands. They will always use the minimum possible effort to fulfill their tasks, unless overkill can annoy their master in some way. Bound demons are unlikely to volunteer information or act independently.

A show of power is the traditional opening move, where the Conjurer demonstrates the demon's weakness and inability to escape, followed by one of the following tactics:

Psychic Assault.

If the summoner has enough Psyche, a direct mental contact is often the best, and quickest, move. Once in control of the demon's mind, the summoner can impose any servitude.

Magical Spell.

An invasive spell is cast on the Demon, forcing it to submit to the conditions of servitude.

Physical Force.

Usually in response to threats from the demon ("if I could just lay my hands on you, I'd rip out your..."), someone offers to fight the demon under the condition that it accept servitude if it loses. Because this is kind of stupid for the demon (the deck is usually stacked pretty badly against the demon), it's necessary to get the demon worked up with a lot of insults, yelling and banter. Then, when the demon is hopping mad, the opportunity to get out and kill something will overcome its better judgement. Any kind of combat is okay, but it's usually a good idea to set the terms before letting the demon out of its confinement.

Threats.

Matching bluster with a demon can be a loud, long, and irritating process. Effectively, the Conjurer promises to kill, torture, or leave the demon in the pentacle for all eternity. Proof, in the form of inflicting a massive injury, causing a vast amount of pain, or leaving the demon trapped for a lengthy period, is often needed before a

powerful demon will agree to anything.

Binding the Sample Demon.

Braithwhit could be bound with Psyche or Magic fairly easily (although a player character would never know). As a combat demon, Braithwhit would see threats of death or torture as challenges to his bravery, so he'd be pretty resistant. On the other hand, he's not too keen on facing eternal imprisonment, so he'd probably crack after a day or two of solitude.

Since Braithwhit would be quite ticked off about being a prisoner, he'd be easy to goad into anger. A few insults shouted back and forth, and he'd go into a rage. In his frenzy, given a chance at striking a blow against his captor, he'd agree to just about any conditions, both for the fight, and for servitude in the event of his defeat. Note that if the conditions for the fight don't limit Braithwhit's Shape Shifting, he's going to be a very hard demon to defeat.

Once bound into Servitude, Braithwhit will be grumpy. He won't exactly neglect his duties, but neither will he be enthusiastic.

If you're one of the Game Masters who likes playing with points, this Demon section should put you in hog heaven. For the rest of us free-wheeling GMs, who'd rather eat worms than apply a multiplier, you can ignore the points and concentrate on how to role-play demons. Either way, everything gets a lot simpler if you use the Demon Worksheet at the end of the book.

COMPELLING DEMONS

Just as qualities and powers can be implanted in creatures with Conjunction, so directives, urges and quests can be inserted into demons (and other creatures, for that matter). These changes in "programming" become irresistible compulsions, and warp the demon's personality.

A demon bound into service through magical Compelling is really not itself. It operates under a modified personality, and just isn't as smart as it was before, some of its memories are clouded or foggy, and its sense of self

severely limited. Demons in this condition follow their conditions of servitude with blind obedience, never really acting independently.

The more complex the Compelling, the longer it takes to implant it into the demon. This is reflected in the Servitude Multiplier, with higher levels requiring more time. It takes about an hour for each point of Compelling.

Compelling the Sample Demon.

Since Braithwhit is willing to go into a military position anyway, Compelling will be fairly easy. However, with his mind fogged up, Braithwhit will often forget to use his Blood Shape Shift, or won't figure out how to use it with any cleverness or skill. Likewise, he may neglect to use Magic Manipulation, or even check out the local Shadow environment.



Rank Table	Psyche	Strength	Endurance	Warfare
Human	+5 (+25)	+5 (+25)	+5 (+25)	+5 (+25)
Chaos	0 (+10)	0 (+10)	0 (+10)	0 (+10)
12th	-	3 (Amber)	2 (Amber)	-
11th	-	6	4 (10)	-
10th	-	9 (20)	6	3
9th	-	12 (40)	8	5
8th	-	18	10 (20)	10 (Amber)
7th	7	20	19	15
6th	9	29 (50)	21	24 (5)
5th	14 (Amber)	34	26	31
4th	15 (5)	37	31 (30)	44
3rd	18 (10)	50	40	50 (10)
2nd	28 (20)	60 (75)	52	61
1st	30 (40)	75 (100)	54 (50)	82 (15)

DEMON ATTRIBUTES

Each demon is Ranked in Psyche, Strength, Endurance and Warfare. Most are Chaos Rank, but some are exceptionally weak, and others are in competition with other demons for higher rank.

Human Rank. Indicates a weakling among demonkind, whether in Psyche, Strength, Endurance or Warfare. Demons with Human Rank Strength or Endurance are generally a bit better than Amberites or Lords of Chaos with the same Ranking. Demons with Human Rank Warfare are equal to other characters with Human Rank Warfare. And demons with Human Rank Psyche are generally worse than Amberites with the same Psyche ranking. [-5 Points].

Chaos Rank. This is the usual Rank for each of the four Attributes. A demon with Chaos rank in Strength or Endurance is a bit superior to an Amberite or Lord of Chaos with the same Rank. Chaos Rank in Warfare for demons is the same as for other characters. Demons tend to be slightly inferior to others when they're all ranked Chaos in Psyche. [Zero Points].

Demon Rank. The Rank varies according to the demon's placement and the number of points spent. The Game Master should arrange a separate scale for demons, ranging upward from Chaos Rank, all the way to 1st Rank. Note that neither demon points nor demon Ranks match player character points or Ranks.

Steady State Bidding. In this case the rankings start out with even bids, going up gradually, usually one or two points at a time. At the higher end there's usually a bit of movement. Check out both the Strength and the Endurance columns in the sample Demon Rank for examples of Steady State Bidding. Since most demons are interested in Strength and Endurance, there are a lot of "rungs" on this ladder.

Fits and Starts. Usually an Attribute where only a few specialists are interested. For demons, ranking in Psyche is relatively rare, but those who are interested are willing to spend a lot of points.

Hot Competition. If a demon decides to get into the battle for ranking in Warfare, then they'll bid fiercely. As can be seen with the sample Demon Rank most of the rungs are spaced widely.

In the sample Demon Rank Table above, the numbers or Ranks in parentheses correspond to the equivalent character Ranks and points.

DEMONIC QUALITIES

NATURAL DEMON ARMOR

In their natural form all demons come complete with a full set of armor. Large areas, like the shoulders, back, chest, forearms, thighs and shins are covered by curved bony plates, often covered with spines or thorns. Even the “soft spots” (hah!) on a demon are covered with flexible damage-resistant scales. Here’s the range of defensive capability:

None. The demon is either unadorned, or has scales and spines that are no more resistant to weapons than thick chunks of skin. A rather rare condition among demons. [-2 Points].

Natural Bone. All the demon’s plates and scales are formed from natural shell and bone. While it offers some protection, the demon’s armor can be cut or pierced by ordinary sharpened weapons. The armor has little resistance to bullets or arrows. [-1 Point].

Resistant to Normal Weapons. The demon’s plates and scales are tough enough to resist glancing or weak blows from normal weapons. Swords, axes, spears, and arrows can all penetrate, given a good angle of attack and sufficient strength, but damage will be reduced because of the armor’s resistance. Even weapons that are augmented with Doubling Damage or Deadly Damage must be wielded with skill, because indirect hits tend to skip off. Small caliber pistol shots and slow-moving bullets (most muzzle-loaders) will be unable to penetrate. [Zero Points].

Impenetrable to Weapons & Firearms. Bulletproof, at least against smaller firearms, the demon’s armor resists penetration from most weapons, including those with Doubling Damage. High powered rifle bullets can still penetrate, but the armor will reduce potential damage. Armor-piercing weapons designed to work against armored vehicles, do full damage. The armor also protects against most explosions, fire, and chemical attacks. [Costs 1 Point].

Resistant to all Energy & Conventional Weapons. Supremely tough, the demon can resist most non-magical attacks. Weapons relying on physical force simply won’t penetrate (although the demon can experience shock from massive impacts). Also resists Deadly Damage weapons. While energy-based attacks, including lasers and flame-throwers, won’t get through the armor, sustained fire can heat up the armor, and can eventually cause damage inside (although demons are notoriously resistant to high temperatures). [Costs 2 Points].

Impervious. Can even resist weapons with Destructive Damage. It usually takes some kind of extraordinary measures, or a highly magicked weapon, to penetrate this armor. [Costs 4 Points].

NATURAL DEMON ARMAMENT

With demons it’s hard to find a place on the body that won’t serve as a makeshift weapon. Aside from the usual talons, fangs, horns, elbow spikes, knuckle spines, shoulder barbs, knee thorns, back quills, heel spurs and miscellaneous bristles, just about every piece of plate has sharp points and edges. Most demons have a couple of sets of “primary” weapons, which have the following possible qualities. The rest of the demon’s armament is usually one step down the ladder of possibilities.

Organic. Natural weapons are formed out of natural horn, bone or enamel. While sharp enough, these structures are basically fragile pieces of the body, as subject to pain and damage as any finger or tooth. Secondary armament is for looks only. [-2 Points].

Natural Bone. All primary natural weapons are formed of bone or other hardened natural material. While sharp and deadly effective against flesh, this stuff is not designed for attacking hardened metal, stone, or even most demonic armor. Edges and points are easily dulled or broken if used carelessly. Secondary natural weapons are even more fragile. [-1 Point].

Extra Hard Points and Edges. The demon’s primary natural weapons are capable of scratching stone or steel, and can be used against those and other armored substances without being broken or damaged. This quality enables demons to do things like claw through doors and fight armored opponents without suffering damage. Secondary weapons are effective against flesh and wood, but can be scratched or cracked if hammered against stone or metal. [Zero Points].

Doubling Damage Armament. In addition to being hardened, the demon’s primary edged and pointed parts are capable of penetrating or slashing through most armor, including artifacts and creatures with “Resistant to Normal Weapons” armor. Secondary natural weapons have Extra Hard Points and Edges. [Costs 1 Point].

Deadly Damage. Durable and extremely sharp, the demon’s natural primary weapons are able to do extraordinary damage, punching through “Resistant to Guns” armor and inflicting consistently life-threatening wounds. [Costs 2 Points].



Destructive Damage. In addition to being damaging, and capable of penetrating even “invulnerable” armor, the demon’s weaponry is somehow poisonous.

Envenomed demons have special glands in their mouths that constantly ooze a caustic venom. This naturally coats the fangs. When preparing for battle, the demon will also lick talons and other natural weapons, coating them as well. This is particularly useful against Shape Shifters, since the venom, aside from being blindingly painful, prevents Shape Shifting a wound closed, or even regeneration.

Other demons have some form of poison stinger, either in the mouth or at the tip of the tail. These stingers inject a dose of fast-acting poison into their victims. Characters with Human Rank Endurance will fall comatose, and die if not treated. Those with Chaos Rank Endurance will be knocked unconscious, but can recover after a few hours of painful tremors. Against those with Amber or better Endurance the poison will hurt, and may even paralyze a portion of the body, but isn’t life-threatening, at least not in single doses. [Costs 4 Points]

DEMONIC RESISTANCE TO ORDER

All demons are better off in their home environment. Regardless of a demon’s resistance to the influence of Pattern, it’s going to be more and more miserable, the closer it gets to Amber.

None. Outside of the environment of Chaos the demon will sicken immediately. Picture all the worst symptoms of a really bad cold, with demon-sized snot to boot. Not a pretty sight. If not rescued the demon will whine and complain loudly for a day before dying. [Zero Points]

Sensitive to Order. The demon will start to slow down as soon as it enters an area dominated by Order. A couple of hours later, its reflexes in combat will be off, and within eight hours it’ll seem to be moving at half speed. Eventually, within a couple of days, the demon will become rigid and immobile. In this form, where the demon looks like a stone statue, it can survive for years. Revival, under the influence of a Chaos environment, takes about a day for every week the demon spent frozen. [Costs 1 Point].

Temporary Resistance to Order. The demon can stand being in a realm of Order for up to a full day without ill effects. After a day, it will lose the ability to Shape Shift, but in all other respects is still powerful for up to a week. Even though the demon is able to function, it will be severely uncomfortable. If the demon shifts to a form suitable for its environment (human or that of a natural animal), it can withstand indefinitely the effects of Order. In demon form, or in any chaotic shape, after

prolonged exposure it will start experiencing the same kind of freezing that affects demons Sensitive to Order. [Costs 2 Points].

Permanent Resistance to Order. The demon can stay in areas controlled by Order indefinitely. Eventually, after a week in the realm of Order, the demon’s Shape Shifting power will slow down, so it takes about twice as long as usual. Otherwise, the only side-effect is that demons in Chaos forms (demonform, gaseous, etc.) will suffer nagging headaches. [Costs 4 Points].

DEMON POWERS

DEMONIC SHADOW

MANIPULATION

Most demons are naturals at manipulating Shadow, though there is a wide range of talent.

None. Although the demon can get around all right in the Courts of Chaos, it must follow regular Ways and byways. The demon hasn’t a clue about manipulating Shadow. Away from the Courts, it can get permanently stuck, with no way of walking through Shadow. [Zero Points].

Sense Shadow. The demon can sense its surroundings, and feel any nearby openings, trails or paths. In Ways of the Courts of Chaos the demon will be able to sense hidden ways. Although it’s not impossible, it would take a lot of time and effort for such a demon to manipulate an object out in Shadow. For example, if the demon tried to shift a coin into the local currency, it would likely take several minutes to get any change at all, a few really wild wrong shifts (no! a nickel, not a pickle!), and a dozen tries to get it right. [Costs 1 Point].

Select Shadow. In the Courts of Chaos this is sufficient for manipulating most Shadow, summoning filmies, or navigating Ways. Out in Shadow, the demon can sense the natural passages from one Shadow to another, and can easily track others through Shadow. Manipulating objects in Shadow is easy. [Costs 2 Points].

Shadowmastery. The demon pretty much has unlimited power to manipulate Shadow at the Chaos end of the universe. The demon understands, intuitively, how to bend Shadowways, or find its way through the Way of a Noble House of Chaos. While few demons have the skill to assemble a Way, any demon with shadowmastery can rip one apart. Out in Shadow, where things are more difficult to manipulate, the demon has the ability to move around and to manipulate objects or people. [Costs 4 Points].

Shift Shadow. The demon has an ability to manipulate Shadow on the order of an initiate of the Pattern. Not only can the demon do just about anything it wants with the Shadow near the Courts, but it can walk or Hellride all the way to the edge of Forest Arden. As with Amberites, the demon can also shift objects, people and places. About the only thing it can't do is find a Shadow of its Desire. [Costs 8 Points].

Evoke Chaos. A demon at this level can do everything included in lesser Shadow manipulation, but can also dramatically shift the surrounding environment by releasing a bit of personal Logrus energy. In some cases this results in massive changes to the environment, as uncontrolled chaos affects the surrounding Shadow. Other demons have the ability to sprout Logrus Tendrils, and use them in the usual ways. Still other demons are able to summon the destructive force of Primal Chaos. [Costs 16 Points].

DEMONIC SHAPE SHIFTING

Demons usually have a "normal" form, complete with armor and natural armament, which they can change into easily. They also are capable of adapting to the varying environments of the Courts of Chaos. Most have at least one disembodied form (gas, plasma or energy), and at least one beast form suitable for use in Black Zone Shadows where the influence of Chaos is weaker.

Named & Numbered Forms/Shapes. Limited to a small number of alternate forms of equivalent mass. Learning a new form can take several days of concentrated effort. The demon can't change its natural size and mass. Healing depends on the demon's Endurance Rank. [Zero Points].

Limited Shape Shift. The demon can shapechange at will, and assume any familiar form. It can appear as a specific human being, but will not be able to approximate the personality or skills of that person. It can learn new forms after observation or psychic impression. Given time for concentration (not in the middle of combat), the demon can Shape Shift wounds closed and rearrange internal organs. Demons with Limited Shape Shift can absorb organic material (food, wood, natural cloth) and increase their size and mass, or reduce themselves by ejecting parts of themselves. [Costs 1 Point].

Blood Shape Shift. In addition to Shape Shifting its body, the demon can create creatures of its own blood. Because of its familiarity with the principles, it can also recognize other blood creatures. Skilled demons are capable of breaking themselves into component creatures, and then reassembling themselves. Self-healing is effectively regeneration. [Costs 2 Points].

Demonic Shape Shift. Shifting is lightning fast. Demons with this level of control tend to develop personal options like multiple vital organs (a couple of spare hearts, a back-up brain, a secondary circulatory system). Unless affected by venom or Pattern, wounds close almost instantly. Such demons are really tough to kill. Even if disassembled, over time they may knit themselves back together. [Costs 4 Points].

Bodiless Shape Shift. There are demons without natural physical bodies, who tend to live as fields of pure energy in the most Chaotic realms of the Pit. Outside of their natural environment they can survive for a time as disembodied, etherial or gaseous forms. Demons of this type either become "body-hoppers," invading and controlling other bodies (success being dependent on relative Psyche), or develop their own unique forms. The demon can also Shape Shift any body it possesses or controls. [Costs 8 Points].

Dimensional Shape Shift. In addition to being able to take on an unlimited number of forms, demons of this type have discovered the ability to shape shift their dimensional selves. They slip into other times, universes, and states of existence effortlessly. For example, Merlin's old demon friend Kergma could shape shift into different mathematical abstractions. Conversing or binding with dimensional demons is difficult, mostly because of their extended perceptions. In other words, a demon could seem to be listening intently, but it may be hearing not only the argument of a single character, but also the arguments that might be put forth by a dozen alternate versions of the character, each an inhabitant of a different version of the Courts of Chaos. Past, present and future are concepts that sometimes become confused, and simple directions are often completely misunderstood. [Costs 16 Points].

DEMONIC MAGIC MANIPULATION

As creatures of Chaos, all demons have natural resistance to sorcery and spell-casting. More powerful demons are capable of sensing the energies of Magic, Trump, Logrus, Pattern, and even Shape Shifting. Very few demons ever learn the arcane arts involved in casting spells, but many can directly influence magical energies.

No Magic. The demon is resistant, but blind to the forces of magic. [Zero Points].

Magic Intuition. Magic is a force that can be seen and felt. In some places, such as Castle Amber, this is relatively weak, but in places like a Black Road, or the Courts of Chaos, the demon feels sources of magic and power, and sees the auras that surround creatures and things. [Costs 1 Point].



Magic Manipulation. The demon can sense magic, magical auras, and the lines of magic running through Shadow, and can also reach out and influence lines, walls or areas of magical energy. Experienced demons can shape magical energy in different forms, short-circuiting some sources, or putting others into cages. [Costs 2 Points].

Magical Well. Accustomed to the environment near Primal Chaos, where massive bolts of energy are commonplace, the demon has learned the trick of “grounding” anything thrown at it. Spells and other sendings are drawn inside the demon and disappear. [Costs 4 Points].

Magic Drain. The demon has the ability to suck up magical energy, either the raw kind, or that used in spells, “eating” it, in a manner of speaking, and using it for a personal reserve of energy. [Costs 8 Points].

Magic Domination. A focus of magical energy itself, and capable of warping, damping, or energizing all the fields of magical power in the vicinity. Unless the demon is right next to a major source of power (Pattern, Logrus, the Fount of Power, etc.), it can pretty much control all the flow of magical energy in the area. [Costs 16 Points].

SERVITUDE MULTIPLIER.

This section determines the relationship between the character and the demon. It is mandatory for characters who own demon servants, as it affects how the demons will behave and the zeal with which they fulfill their duties.

None. Yes, you get the demon of your desire. With absolutely no strings attached. The demon has no particular compulsion to stick around, to obey, or even to listen. No extra cost, because the multiplier is one [*1 Point].

Mission. The demon is created, or summoned, or invoked, with a single thought in mind. For example, a demon could be a “Merlin-Eater,” intent only on hunting down and eating Merlin. The demon has no relationship with whoever brought it forth, and could care less about any other instructions. Costs twice the total points [*2 Points].

Pact. A bargain involving some specific duty or job. Demons with this kind of relationship are often lazy and ill-tempered, and will attempt to exploit loop-holes in the wording of their commands. They use the minimum possible effort to fulfill their tasks, unless overkill can annoy the character in some way and gain an early release. Costs three times the total points [*3 Points].

Servitude. A long-term deal, where the demon works toward more general goals. Groups of demons often cut deals of servitude with the Noble Houses of the Courts of Chaos, sometimes for generations. Costs four times the total points [*4 Points].

Devotion. The demon accepts the goals and ambitions of its condition of servitude, so it is more of an ally than a servant. Demons with deals of devotion are just as likely to operate independently as under orders. If they deem it necessary, they may even attempt to recruit other demons for emergencies, sometimes making bargains of their own. Costs five times the total points [*5 Points].

Lifetime. Typically this involves a deal cut at the birth of a young Lordling of Chaos, or the ascension of the new Lord of a House. The demon agrees to protect, guide and serve, on a permanent basis. Note the lifetime usually refers to the lifetime of the beneficiary or, more rarely, the summoner or whoever cuts the deal with the demon, not the life of the demon. Costs six times the total points [*6 Points].

QUANTITY MULTIPLIER

This applies only to the number of demons who are to be involved in a particular arrangement of servitude. It's possible to make a deal with a single demon, with a team of like-minded demons, with a family group, or with an entire demon race.

Note that one other hazard of binding demons, especially in quantity, is the possibility of stepping on someone else's toes. For example, if the demon group already has a deal going with a House in the Courts of Chaos, the character is likely to get a social call from some rather irritated Lords of Chaos.

Unique. The deal is with a single demon. No extra cost, because the multiplier is one [*1 Point].

Named & Numbered. The demons have something in common that makes them bargain as a group. For example, they might be a work crew, a tactical fighting unit, or just a bunch of good buddies. Five to seven demons are the usual size of a working group, but it

could include up to a dozen. The cost is double (*2) that of a single demon [*2 Points].

Family. Some family lines of demons are committed to a particular calling, trade or loyalty. Negotiations are usually with the family elder, often a demon who's beyond his prime, but who has picked up a few shrewd bargaining techniques. Defining the "family" can easily turn into the trickiest part of the deal, but it usually includes at least forty adult demons. Costs three times normal [*3 Points].

Demon Race. An entire race of demons of the Courts of Chaos. Their numbers may run from mere hundreds to millions, but the deal includes the entire population. Negotiation will mean summoning the leader, or leadership council, of the demonic race. It's not unlikely that they'd engage legal counsel before concluding any deal. Costs four times the total for a single specimen [*4 Points].

DEMON EXAMPLES

MERLIN'S DEMON COMPANIONS

I thought back to my childhood, to some of the strange adventures for which this place had served as a point of departure. Gryll and I would come here, Glait slithering at our feet, coiled about a limb or riding somewhere amid my garments. I would give that odd ululant cry I had learned in a dream, and sometimes Kergma would join us, come skittering down the folds of darkness, out of some frayed area of twisted space. I was never sure exactly what Kergma was, or even of what gender, for Kergma was a shapeshifter and flew, crawled, hopped or ran in a succession of interesting forms.

Prince of Chaos

GLAIT

"It warms my cold blood to ssee you again, dear boy. You've traveled far?"

"I have. Very."

"One night we shall eat mice and lie beside a fire. You will warm me a ssaucer of milk and tell me of your adventuress ssince you left the Wayss of Ssawall. We will find ssome marrow bones for Gryll, if he be sstill about—"

Glait & Merlin, in Prince of Chaos

Glait [Zero Points] - A small demon, given to hunting mice and other vermin, Glait's usual form is that of a furry snake. Even though demons like Glait, small and inoffensive, are the vast majority, they tend to be ignored when Lords of Chaos speak of demons.

Chaos Psyche [Zero Points]

Chaos Strength [Zero Points]

Chaos Endurance [Zero Points]

Chaos Warfare [Zero Points]

No Natural Armor [-1 Point]

Metallic Fangs [-1 Point]

No Resistance to Order [Zero Points]

Sense Shadow [1 Point]

Named & Numbered Shape Shift [Zero Points]

Magic Intuition [1 Point]

Unique [*1 Point]

Lifetime [*6 Points] - It seems to have bound itself to Merlin's service, even though it has spent many years simply waiting and watching.

GRYLL

"Gryll," I said. "Do you detect a spell upon me?"

"Aye, m'lord," he replied.

"Why didn't you mention it?"

"I thought it one of your own—for defense, perhaps."

"Can you lift it? I'm at a disadvantage, here on the inside."

"'Tis too tangled in your person. I wouldn't know where to begin."

"Can you tell me anything about it?"

"Only that it's there, m'lord. Does seem rather heavy about the head, though."

"Could be coloring my thinking a certain way, then?"

"Aye, a pale blue."

"I wasn't referring to your manner of perceiving it. Only to the possibility that it could be influencing my thinking."

His wings flashed blue, then red. Our tunnel expanded suddenly and the sky grew bright with the crazy colors of Chaos. The star we followed now took on the proportions of a small light—magically enhanced, of course—within a high tower of a sepulchral castle, all gray and olive, atop a mountain the bottom and middle of which had been removed. The island of stone floated above a petrified forest. The trees burned with opal fires—orange, purple, green.

"I'd imagine it could," Gryll responded. "But its unraveling be a bafflement to this poor demon."

Merlin & Gryll, in *Prince of Chaos*

Gryll [22 Points] - Merlin's old companion, and now in the service of Suhuy. Gryll is no stranger to forays out into the realms of Order. Usually winged, Gryll is considered strong among his kind.

Chaos Psyche [Zero Points]

Demon Rank Strength [12 Points] - Against other demons Gryll is in the mid-rank, but he's as strong as Amberites with forty points.

Chaos Endurance [Zero Points]

Chaos Warfare [Zero Points]

Energy Resistant Armor [2 Points]

Deadly Damage Armament [2 Points]

Sensitive to Order [1 Point]

Select Shadow [2 Points]

Limited Shape Shift [1 Point]

Magic Manipulation [2 Points]

Unique [*1 Point]

Servitude [Zero Points] - Although Gryll has reached some agreement with Suhuy, it's probably voluntary.



KERGMA

"Dad! I'm in trouble!" came to me then.

"Where are you? What's the matter?" I asked.

"I followed this entity I met. Pursued her—it. Almost a mathematical abstraction. Called Kergma. Got caught here at an odd-even dimensional interface, where I'm spiraling. Was having a good time up until then—"

"I know Kergma well. Kergma is a trickster. I can feel your spatial situation. I am about to send bursts of energy to counter the rotation. Let me know if there are problems. As soon as you're able to Trump through, tell me and come ahead."

I pulsed it through the spikard and the braking effect began. Moments later, he informed me, "I think I can escape now."

Prince of Chaos

Kergma [30 Points] - Merlin describes Kergma as almost a mathematical abstraction. Ghostwheel made the mistake of playing something like a game of "tag" with Kergma. Such is Kergma's nature, that Ghostwheel ended up in a recursive trap in multi-dimensional space, and was only released with Merlin's help.

Demon Rank Psyche [14 Points] - Although highly ranked for a demon, Kergma is probably not the equal of someone with Amber Rank Psyche.

Chaos Strength [Zero Points]

Chaos Endurance [Zero Points]

Chaos Warfare [Zero Points]

Weapon Resistant Natural Armor [Zero Points]

Extra Hard Armament [Zero Points]

No Resistance to Order [Zero Point]

Shadowmastery [4 Points]

Dimensional Shift [8 Points]

Magic Well [4 Points]

Unique [*1 Point]

No Servitude [*1 Points]

FIRE ANGEL

It was a twelve-foot Fire Angel that had just entered—russet colored, with wings like stained glass windows—and along with intimations of mortality, it brought me recollections of a praying mantis, with a spiked collar and thornlike claws protruding through its short fur at every suggestion of an angle. One of these, in fact, caught on and unhinged a swinging door as it came inside. It was a Chaos beast—rare, deadly, and highly intelligent. I hadn't seen one in years, and I'd no desire to see one now; also, I'd no doubt that I was the reason it was here. For the moment I regretted having used my cardiac arrest spell on a mere Bandersnatch—until I recalled that Fire Angels have three hearts. I glanced about quickly as it spied me, gave voice to a brief hunting wail, and advanced.

Sign of Chaos

Fire Angel [70 Points] - Used as hunters by the Lords and Ladies of Courts of Chaos. Putting one under orders is a dangerous affair. This loner is unusual, since they are usually sent out in pairs.

Chaos Psyche [Zero Points]

Demon Rank Strength [20 Points] - This is very high on the demon scale, about the equivalent of fifty or sixty points when ranked against Amberites.

Demon Rank Endurance [4 Points] - The Fire Angel is of low rank compared to other demons, but is better than Amber Rank.

Chaos Rank Warfare [Zero Points]

Impervious Armor [4 Points]

Destructive Damage Armament [4 Points]

Temporary Resistance to Order [2 Points]

Select Shadow [2 Points]

Blood Shape Shift [2 Points]

Magic Intuition [1 Point]

Unique [*1 Point]

Mission [*2 Points] - Given the psychic scent of Merlin, it was simply instructed to go out and kill.

DWELLER ON THE THRESHOLD

A huge rotund figure barred my way, looking like a purple Buddha with bat ears. Details resolved themselves as I drew nearer: protruding fangs, yellow eyes that seemed to be lidless, long red claws on its great hands and feet. It was seated in the middle of the tunnel and made no effort to rise. It wore no clothing, but its great swollen belly rested upon its knees, concealing its sex. Its voice had been gruffly masculine, however, and its odor generically foul.

"Hi," I said. "Nice day, wasn't it?"

It growled and the temperature seemed to rise slightly. Frakir had grown frantic and I calmed her mentally.

The creature leaned forward and with one bright nail inscribed a smoking line in the stone of the floor. I halted before it.

"Cross that line, sorcerer, and you've had it," it said.

Blood of Amber

Scrof [84 Points] - Capable of devouring magic, along with those who cast it. Its kind are useful as watchdogs and doormen. Of relatively low intelligence, Scrof isn't one to get tired of its assignment. Confident and self-assured (or obnoxious, depending on how you look at it).

Chaos Psyche [Zero Points]

Demon Rank Strength [6 Points] - Against other demons Scrof ranks pretty low, but it's enough to make him somewhat better than Amber Rank Strength.

Chaos Endurance [Zero Points]

Demon Rank Warfare [10 Points] - On the demon scale, Scrof is pretty impressive, but he's really the equivalent of Amber Rank.

No Natural Armor [-2 Points]

Extra Hard Armament [Zero Points]

Permanent Resistance to Order [4 Points]

Sense Shadow [1 Point]

Limited Shape Shift [1 Point]

Magic Drain [8 Points]

Unique [*1 Point]

Pact [*3 Points] - According to Scrof's deal, he was to bar the way of any travellers, with the exception of certain supernatural creatures (or, possibly, anyone that Scrof felt itself incapable of stopping). He was allowed to eat anyone who tried to cross the line.

DUELS

BY JIM KENNY

"Blood!" Mandor cried, as the beads formed upon Jurt's leg and drifted. "Is there satisfaction, gentlemen?"

"I'm satisfied," I answered.

"I'm not!" Jurt replied, turning to face me as I drifted to his left and rotated to my right. "Ask me again after I've cut his throat!"

Blood of Amber

Your name and reputation have been maliciously slandered. Now you are the subject of undeserved public humiliation before your peers. Or, consider this: your chosen mate has been grievously hurt by another, or worse yet, killed. The one responsible does not even deny the act. Anguish and pain!

Assuming that laws even apply or can be enforced, your sense of self demands satisfaction. An emptiness fills your being as you try to collect the pieces left by this tragedy. Is there no Justice?

An ancient and time-honored method of settling personal conflicts is the duel of honor. Complete with its own system of rules, it serves as the most highly regarded method for the resolution of such incidents. Duels of Honor allow for the differing parties to meet face to face and, through the named method of duel, seek satisfaction and end the conflict.

In most campaigns, with player characters and Non-Player Characters of vast power and extreme egocentricity, it is certainly understandable that they square off over any number of perceived slights of honor.

In a duel, the participants set the rules. All the conditions, from the type of duel, physical or arcane, to the weapons allowed, to the conditions for satisfaction and the selection of judges and seconds, are variable.

CONVENTIONAL DUELS

"...Eric, using a lighter weapon, sidestepped and came in under his arm. Dalt dropped the point of his blade, moved to his left, and parried it. The two weapons were suited for very different styles—Eric's being at the heaviest end of the rapier class, Dalt's at the lighter end of the Broadsword."

Prince of Chaos

The conventional is, as the name implies, the catch-all category for dueling on physical terms. The use of weapons, both mundane and fantastic, the various forms of hand to hand combat, and all manner of contests of skill and strength are the most obvious categories that fit under this heading. Swords, pistols, lasers, martial arts, wrestling... trisps and fandons, any weapon can be used.

In France,
between the years of
1589 and 1608,
more than
8,000 gentlemen
were killed in
witnessed and recorded
Duels of Honor.

ARCANE DUELS

"Mandor tossed a paralysis spell at me, and I pushed it away, ready for anything now. As I was doing this, Dara hit me with an elaborate working I recognized as a Confusion Storm. I was not about to try matching them both, spell for spell. A good sorcerer may have a half dozen major spells hung. Their judicious employment is generally enough for dealing with most situations. In a sorcerous duel the strategy involved in their employment is a major part of the game."

Prince of Chaos

This category is for the magically and/or mentally inclined. It is a good bit more specific in nature, in that it requires certain skills before one can participate. Sorcery and Psychic Duels are the most common categories within this arena. Trumps and Artifacts are also handy accessories, or can even be the basis of a form of Arcane Dueling themselves. You decide.

CONDITIONS FOR VICTORY

Either, or both, of the duelists is offended by something. What it will take to provide satisfaction is usually the condition for a victory. Here are three possible conditions for victory. Do not feel confined by these but rather let them serve as a base to build upon.

FIRST BLOOD

The duelist who draws the first sign of blood from an opponent is the victor. This is the most common condition set upon Duels of Honor, and is the convention among frequent duelists.

YIELD

This condition is of a more serious nature, in that the duel will continue until one of the participants surrenders the fight. Victory and satisfaction are awarded to the other. Should neither party yield, the duel will proceed until one drops from exhaustion, lack of blood, or a combination thereof. The intensity of the duel is greater and so are the ramifications. This duel is for accusations of a serious import, in that one person must publicly yield to another. For an Amberite or Lord of Chaos to do that must mean that they are dangerously close to death.

DEATH

Dead. Dead. Dead. Matters must be grave for the participants to challenge and accept such a condition.

SECONDS

It's a pretty good idea to have witnesses around for any formal Duel. It saves a lot of hassle when there is someone to back up your story... or swear to your lie, as the case may be. Each principal chooses the same number of seconds.

These Seconds are supposed to create an atmosphere of "fair-play."

Typically, the seconds for both sides meet before the duel and work out a number of conditions in advance. Aside from agreeing among themselves on proper conduct, and how they will react if the participants get carried away, they may also arrange for other seconds, a neutral judge or judges (typical in certain fencing duels where "legal" forms are as important as wounds), and for transportation and medical assistance. The seconds usually choose and prepare weapons, being scrupulously careful to ensure that both sides are equally outfitted. Other details might include arrangements for spectators, media coverage, and even decorations and refreshments.

The responsibilities of seconds on the day of the duel include ensuring that the principals arrive on time, carrying the weapons onto the field of Honor, and making sure that the Duel proceeds within the bounds of the Conditions. If a second's principal should happen to fall ill or be stricken with a malady, the second is often expected to fill in as a substitute combatant.

The most important responsibility of the seconds is enforcement of the duel's conditions. When one principal cheats or exceeds the prescribed conditions, the seconds of both sides should intercede.

HOW TO RUN A DUEL

Where does the demand for satisfaction end? Are all parties agreed that satisfaction was met when the duel was over? Who plots for some secret retribution? Was the duel fought within the terms agreed upon before it began? How badly did its outcome effect a particular faction, cabal, or House? They are all wonderful questions, answered differently in each campaign.

STEP 1—THE OFFENSE

You need an event or series of events that would ultimately result in a challenge and a demand for satisfaction. It is important to keep the player character's motivations in mind. A Character's previous play will enable a Game Master to customize an appropriate encounter for individual Players.

Would the player character be the one to make such a challenge? If he or she were the type that strutted around with an all-too-apparent Code of Honor, or if the prevailing events confronting the player character offended his or her "delicate" sensibilities, yes. The Game

Master need only throw a few events across the character's path.

Could the player character be the one challenged? If that player character reveled in making trouble for others, or just plain walked into the path of trouble for whatever reasons, yes. Then the Game Master has but to place the character into situations where their rambunctious ways will lead to a demand for satisfaction. It all depends upon the personality of the player character.

Something to remember: the scene must be strong enough to capture the attention of the player character. It must be a 'hook' to draw them into the depths of the situation. The emphasis is on the Role-playing.

GM: Okay, Jayson, back to you. You were still in the Courts, right?

Player: Yes... I was spending a lazy afternoon with a Hellmaiden that I know.

GM: Right. Any place in particular?

Player: I don't know... Uhm.

GM: Your residence or hers? You tell me.

Player: I suppose, hers.

GM: Fine. You know that it has been several turnings since you arrived. It's already purple sky and through the opaque ceiling you can see the stippling in the sky that would tell you it's about to turn again. She pours herself a drink from the nearby decanter. She then looks to you. Are you holding out your glass?

Player: Sure, I can always use a refill.

GM: After a couple of sips she sets aside her glass and moves in close to you, like she might want to get intimate. What are you doing?

Player: Is that my impression? She wants to get more intimate.

GM: Yes.

Player: Okay, I'll set my glass down and be friendly, I guess.

GM: After a few moments of that, you notice that she is moving in even closer. Do you wish to continue?

Player: Sure, never one to disappoint a lady.

GM: From behind her you can see the familiar rainbow shimmer effect of a trump.

Player: What? Trump! Who?

GM: You don't know. Not visible yet... Soon though.

Player: I'll try to disengage from Leyada.

GM: You can't seem to, she only becomes more aggressive and playful. The Rainbow steadies and a man steps through, one you don't recognize. He's dressed in a shifting and shimmering outfit that seems to snap and slip about him. Almost alive. Over his back is a nasty looking cutlass-like blade... You can tell that it seems to be a part of the Logrus itself. He stops dead in his tracks when he sees the two of you. The rainbow fades behind him and you notice that his form seems to be wavering a bit. Like he's having a tough time holding his shape.

Player: Push Leyada from me and stand.

GM: You do that. What now?

Player: Does he look like he going to draw his weapon?

GM: (based on the warfare score, the Game Master is inclined to offer a bit) Possibly, but it seems there is a bit of shock. You could probably get the drop on him... Are you going to take it?

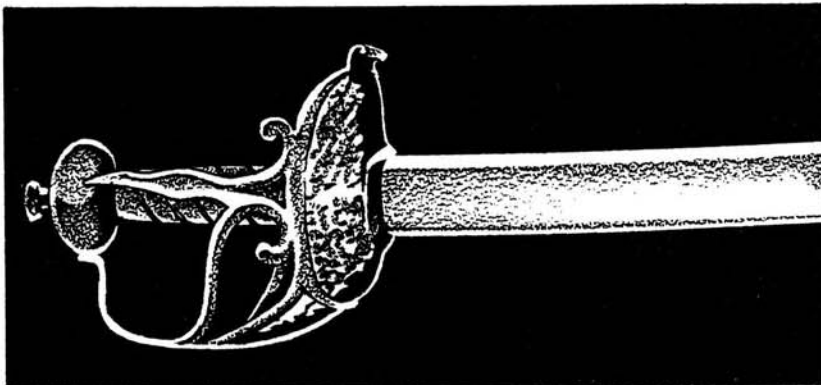
Player: No! I'll try to talk my way out...

That is the trouble with the "edge," it's so hard to tell when it's too late to turn back. What started as an interesting way to spend some time and role-play turns out to be a rather involved encounter with some serious ramifications.

The Game Master knew that the Character had a penchant for dalliances. Therefore it wasn't difficult at all to "hook" the Character with one. The scene was "painted" and played out so that the Player became absorbed. More or less, it was a trap.

Is it fair to snare a character?

You better believe it.



STEP 2—THE CHALLENGE

Next is the scene that makes the Duel formal. The challenge and all that good stuff that goes into getting the thing ready. In other words, everything right up to the moment the principals meet for the Duel itself. Conditions, Seconds, other witnesses, and how the duel will be fought.

Player: "I don't know who you are..."

GM: The stranger says, "Obviously." You, as Jayson, notice that he is quite in a state of agitation. Still having some trouble holding shape, like this might not be his natural form. His hands are clenching and unclenching reflexively.

Player: "There has to be some way we can talk this out. The fact that you are listening tells me that we can talk this through."

GM: "I'm listening, but you're not saying anything..."

Player: "I had no idea, that you and she were..."

GM: "Were what?"

Player: "Uh... Involved. I would regret my actions and apologize had I known that..."

GM: "Had you known, I would have already killed you. And had you known, an apology would have been useless."

Player: "Then you realize the predicament I'm in here. I don't wish to impose or intrude any further. I promise that this will be the last you ever see or hear of..."

GM: "Not good enough... You've already intruded too far. You are here in my Ways and I must assume that that means you are the instigator of what I just witnessed."

Player: "Good Sir," I'll say. "What can I do or say to make amends by you for this terrible oversight on my part?"

GM: He seems to think this over a bit... You also notice that he has seemingly gained his composure and he is holding his human form. He furrows his brow and you see the slightest upturn of the corner of his mouth.

Almost

wicked... "I want a formal apology to myself and my Lady, to be spoken before the Court of Thelbane... High Prince."

Player: You mean he recognizes me?

GM: Looks that way.

Player: And I don't know him? I'm thinking real hard...

GM: Hard to say. Perhaps if you spent more time in the Court and less with the ladies... I'll grant you this though, you have seen him in the Court on occasion, but that's about it.

Player: I'll say, "My Lord, I can not apologize for an action where I do not find myself in error."

GM: Are you sure?

Player: I'm not going to apologize, she came on to me!

GM: Just asking. He says, "Then I'm left with no other recourse but to make a demand for satisfaction. I, Talmed of Chanicut, Second Warlord to the Throne of Chaos, formally challenge you to a Duel of Honor and a Demand for Satisfaction for your conduct regarding my Lady."

Player: No. Have I heard that name before? Or the position?

GM: Yes to both questions.

Player: What do I know about him?

GM: Pretty tough customer with a track record for fighting Duels.

Player: Great, a ringer. All right. I'll say, "Name your conditions, Talmed!"

GM: He says, "A Duel to the Yield. In Chaos form with no other advantages or weapons."

Player: Do I know his Chaos form?

GM: No.

Player: Okay, I'll say, "I ask for Seconds... two."

GM: He nods.

Player: "And the location?"

GM: "Out upon the Whispering Bridge... Red Sky, first turning."

STEP 3—THE DUEL ITSELF

It's most important to illustrate the scene and make it vivid. Any combat is an interactive process. Both the Game Master and the Player play their parts to see the story to a conclusion.

Jayson has chosen his seconds and is currently in his Chaos form. The three of them have made their way through the City to the bridge.

Player: Is the figure Talmed?

GM: Hard to tell. It's some sort of demonic-looking creature that you don't recognize. What are you doing?

Player: I'll go to the centerpiece of the floating bridge to meet the demon. Can I see it better once I'm there?

GM: Oh, yes... It stands about 7 feet tall, and thin, but with very defined muscles. It has four long arms that end in six fingers with needle-like claws. Its skin is a metallic grey color. There is a heavy bone ridge that comes up over the skull and one on each side of the face. These seem to serve as cheek bones and protection for two silvery colored eyes that are large and round and somewhat set back to the sides. Sort of like a reptile's, and they are capable of independent movement. It's wearing a light tunic that is very form fitting. All the while, it seems to be watching you and its claws are flexing in a random way. His long, thin, forked tongue flicks outward occasionally.

Player: Does it say anything?

GM: No.

Player: I'll take up a defensive stance. Like a wrestler...

GM: Anything else?

Player: Uhm, what's he doing?

GM: Holding himself in a position that seems to afford him the best possible range of choices. He seems to be studying you.

Player: I'll say, "The first move is yours."

GM: You hear a low rasping sound, perhaps a laugh, from him... but nothing that you could recognize as words. He then begins to circle. What are you doing?

Player: I'll circle too to keep my distance from his arms. Just keep the distance.

GM: This goes on for a little bit, and at one point, when he and you have your backs to the sides of the bridge, he lashes out with his upper right and lower left. What are you doing?

Player: I'll step through behind the upper swing to avoid the other.

GM: In other words, you'll move towards him and not back.

Player: I don't think going backwards would be such a good idea. I really want to move to the side, timing his swing.

GM: He's very fast, and as you do this, his second sweep rakes your back and sends you tumbling. But the good news is... you did go to the side.

Player: How bad am I hurt?

GM: Not too bad. You really don't feel it too much at all. Stings a little, like cutting yourself with a razor blade. You do know that there is some blood flow back there.

Player: Okay, I'll get up and turn as fast as I can to meet his rush.

GM: You turn... And he's standing there, a few feet away, and it looks like he's waiting for you. You hear that low rasping sound again.

Player: He's laughing at me?

GM: Hard to tell. You might get that impression.

Player: I'll start to circle again, keeping ready.

GM: He immediately closes the distance as his upper arms start sweeping inward. The lower ones are coming straight at you.

Player: Do I think I could get a cut at him with my own claws?

GM: You could try.

Player: Thanks. Alright... An arm sweep from his left to try and turn his shoulders out, followed by...

GM: He sees this and one of the lower arms rakes outward and tears across your chest. The strength of it sends you back a few feet. The blood is already welling up. It hurts... real bad. And he's coming in for more. All four arms moving in the air as he advances. He then speaks in a raspy snarling voice, "You can yield to me at any time... Princeling..."

Take notice of the way the Game Master used his descriptions to elicit reactions from the player. From the very description of the foe, the player was hesitant.

The resolution is undecided up to this point. After all, the Game Master took great effort to explain the player character's disadvantages, and the opponent's strengths. In his caution, Jayson just hasn't probed enough to figure out any openings...



A DUEL IN THE COURTS OF CHAOS

"First Blood!" Despil had cried. "Which is sufficient! Have you satisfaction?"

"No!" Jurt had shouted. "I barely scratched him!" and he spun on his stone and waved the triple claws of his trisp in my direction as he prepared to have at me again.

The blood oozed from the incision in my left forearm and formed itself into beads which rose into the air and drifted away from me like a handful of scattered rubies. I raised my fandon into a high guard position and lowered my trisp, which I held far out to the right and angled forward. I bent my left knee and rotated my stone 90 degrees on our mutual axis. Jurt corrected his own position immediately and dropped a half-dozen feet. I turned another 90 degrees, so that each of us seemed to be hanging upside down in relation to the other.

"Bastard son of Amber!" he cried, and the triple lances of light raked toward me from his weapon, to be shattered into bright, mothlike fragments by the sweep of my fandon, to fall, swirling, downward into the Abyss of Chaos above which we rode.

"Up yours," I replied, and squeezed the haft of my trisp, triggering the pulsed beams from its three hair-fine blades. I extended my arm above my head as I did so, slashing at his shins.

He swept the beams away with his fandon, at almost the full extent of their eight-foot effective range. There is about a three-second recharge pause on a trisliver, but I feinted a dead cut toward his face, before which he raised fand reflexively, and I triggered the trisp for a swirl cut at his knees. He broke the one-second pulse in low fand, triggered a thrust at my face and spun over backward through a full 360, counting on the recharge time to save his back and coming up, fandon high, to cut at my shoulder.

But I was gone, circling him, dropping and rotating erect. I cut at his own exposed shoulder but was out of range. Despil, on his own beachball-sized stone, was circling also, far to my right, while my own second—Mandor—high above, was dropping quickly. We clung to our small stones with shapeshifted feet, there on an outer current of Chaos, drifting, as at the whirlpool's rim. Jurt rotated to follow me, keeping his left forearm—to which the fandon is attached, elbow and wrist—horizontal, and executing a slow circular movement with it. Its three-foot length of filmy mesh, mord-weighted at the bottom, glittered in the balefire glow, which occurred at random intervals from many directions. He held his trisp in middle attack position, and he showed his teeth but was not smiling as I moved and he moved at opposite end of the diameter of a ten-foot circle which we described over and over, looking for an opening.

I tilted the plane of my orbit and he adjusted his own immediately to keep me company. I did it again, and so did he. Then I did the dive—90 degrees forward, fandon raised and extended—and I turned my wrist and dropped my elbow, angling my raking cut upward beneath his guard.

He cursed and cut, but I scattered his light, and three dark lines appeared upon his left thigh. The trisliver only cuts to a depth of about three quarters of an inch through flesh, which is why the throat, eyes, temples, inner wrists, and femoral arteries are particularly favored targets in a serious encounter. Still, enough cuts anywhere and you eventually wave goodbye to your opponent as he spins downward in a swarm of red bubbles into that place from whence no traveler returns...

Blood of Amber

QUEST FOR FRAKIR

by Cathy Klessig & Erick Wujcik

What was that throbbing at my wrist? Oh, yes, Frakir. It had been going on for some small while, and I'd barely noticed.

"Sorry you lost your voice, old girl," I said, stroking her as I explored the room for threats both psychic and physical. "I can't find a damned thing here that I should be worried about."

Immediately she spiraled down from my wrist and tried to remove the ring from my finger.

"Stop!" I ordered. "I know the ring could be dangerous. But only if you use it wrongly. I'm a sorcerer, remember? I'm into these matters. There is nothing special about it for me to fear."

But Frakir disobeyed my order and continued her attack on the ring, which I could now only attribute to some form of magical artifact jealousy. I tied her in a tight knot around the bedpost and left her there, to teach her a lesson.

Knight of Shadows

STORY SUMMARY

Whether he's King of Chaos or not, Merlin wants to get Frakir back. He's busy off in the Courts of Chaos, it's too trivial a problem for any of the elder Amberites, so guess who gets stuck with the job?

GETTING STARTED

If there is a Lord or Lady of Chaos among the player characters, all the better. Merlin should have a brief, private conference with him or her, explaining the mission and giving the messenger the following items—a Trump of Random; a note to Random, introducing the messenger and asking for the return of Frakir; and a Trump of Merlin, for use when the mission is completed.

If none of the player characters are suitable envoys from Merlin, then a non-player character, Lord Noal, will get the mission, the wand, the note, and the two Trumps.

Before anything is revealed of what will occur, each of the rest of the player characters should be asked, "Where are you, and what are you doing?" They should then be role-played to Random's study. In most cases a servant fetching them, or a quick Trump call, ought to suffice.

The Game Master, after setting the scene, can read the following speech from King Random:

"It seems that, the last time he was in Amber, my nephew Merlin left something behind. If I understand this note right, he tied something called a strangling cord to a bedpost in Brand's bedroom. Apparently it's some kind of chaos critter that answers to the name of, um, (he squints at the note paper), yeah, Frakir.

"So far, so good... The problem is, there's nothing up there, though you're welcome to look around...

"Anyway, I need somebody to help these folks (at which point, Random will introduce any guests from the Courts of Chaos). They need to go looking for the damn thing, and they ought to get help from family...

"That okay with you guys?"

The next time there's a break in the conversation, or if asked other questions, Random will respond:

"Oh, yeah. The wand. It seems that Merlin has made this wand thing. It's supposed to, like, keep the strangling cord from hurting anyone. If I've got this right, all you've got to do is point it at, um, what's-it's-name, Frakir, and the cord will wrap around the wand. Or something like that..."

If pressed for more details, Random will answer something like this:

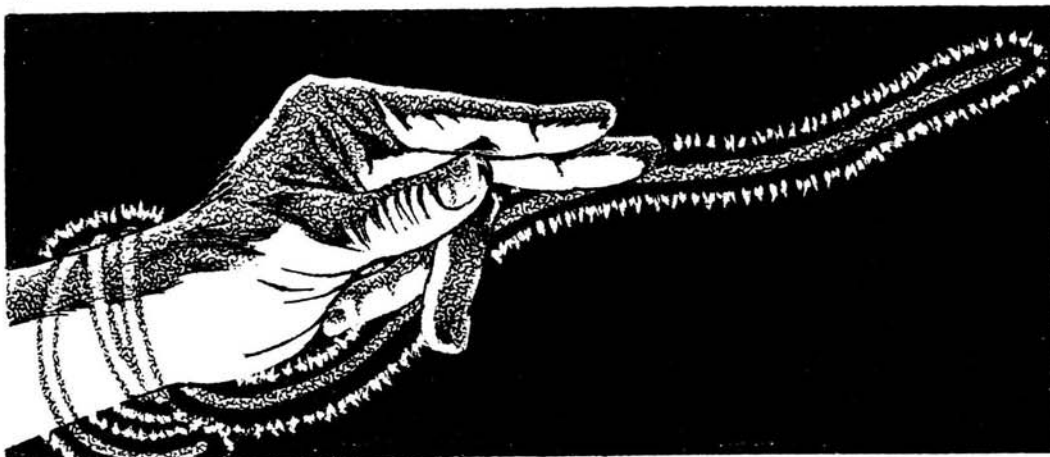
"Hell, I don't know. The thing probably crawled under the door, or out a crack in the window, or... It's a chaos thingie, who knows how it got out. That's why I need help. All I know is, I'm positive it's no longer in the Castle Amber..."

If pushed, Random will admit that he had Bleys and Fiona help search for the strangling cord, and he even used the Jewel of Judgement. Bottom line, he's convinced that either some other Amberite has grabbed it, or the thing snuck out into Shadow somewhere.

If any of the group tries to make excuses, or duck out, Random will take him or her aside, and say the following:

"Look, I know this is a bum deal, but the idea of a Lord of Chaos wandering around Amber, causing Unicorn-knows-what kind of trouble, makes my skin crawl. So, come on, what do you say? It's not like there's any paperwork involved..."

Other matters will require Random's attention (at least three Court clerks are making a lot of harrumphing sounds, and rustling pieces of parchment). He'll leave as soon as there's a general agreement to take on the problem.



LORD NOAL OF HOUSE BENESITH

ATTRIBUTES

Psyche = Amber Rank
Strength = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]
Endurance = Chaos Rank [+10 Points]
Warfare = Amber Rank

POWERS

Logrus Mastery [45 Points]
Shape Shifting [35 Points]
Sorcery [15 Points]
High Compelling [25 Points]

Noal is young, and looks it. He's unreasonably handsome—it's a wonderful thing to be a shape-shifter—and often changes the color of his eyes to match his mood or the person he's talking to, though he always likes his hair to be black. He's of medium height and weight (5'10" and 175 pounds).

His movements are both military and graceful. He wears a black silk doublet and hose, carries a rapier, and has a small golden wyvern on his collar—a souvenir of his

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

It should be up to the player characters to figure out how to track down Frakir. There's no set way to do it, but the fact that the wand contains a Psychic impression of Frakir could be a lot of help.

If push comes to shove, and the group is completely clueless, they can always try Trumping Merlin. He's busy, and upset that Frakir hasn't been found. If the player characters seem completely lost, Merlin can either share a Psychic impression of the strangling cord ("here, try following that"), or put some kind of "finder" spell on a character.

days in the cavalry during the Patternfall War.

Noal's manners are perfect, as befits a man from a society where etiquette is a matter of life and death. But, however polite he may be, there's no way he considers any Amberite as his equal. Even among Lords of Chaos, his respect is hard to win.

Noal should be approximately as powerful as an average member of the group he'll work with. If necessary, he can be given any or all of the following (or whatever else seems appropriate): a Logrus-based sword of power; damage resistance on the golden wyvern, with transferal to wearer; Advanced Shape Shifting; or some Power Words (e.g. Psychic Defense, Resume True Form, Pattern Negation, Pain Attack, and Weaken Structure).

Noal will be polite, but not particularly friendly. Truth to tell, he resents the implication that he can't handle this business himself. However, rather than cause an incident between Merlin and Random, he will stay with the Amberites. He doesn't mind letting them know he doesn't need a nursemaid, however. He'll simply request that they stay out of his way while he completes his assignment.

BRAND'S CHAMBERS

Since the area has already been swept clean by Random, Bleys, Fiona and Benedict, there's not much that will trouble the characters. There's a gap under the door, and a crack in the window (in fact, this is how Frakir got out, by forcing its way through the window), and that's about it.

Still, there may be the odd enchantment on Brand's mirror, and an overly intense examination of some of Brand's artwork may result in some unsettling Trump experiences. Feel free to be creative...

GETTING THE TRAIL

A writhing thing of Chaos has got to leave an impression somewhere. Sooner or later, if the characters keep working at it, they can find a sign that Frakir was out in Forest Arden. Once there, anyone with a Psychic impression of the strangling cord can use Pattern as a guide for their objective.

INTO DARK ARDEN

Almost everyone who enters or leaves Amber by land has to pass through the Forest of Arden. So it should be no great surprise when Frakir's trail leads in that direction.

Anyone who is a child of Julian, or an officer in the Rangers, may feel confident and in control in the great forest. In Arden, they know what they are doing.

But there are many Ardens. Amid its variations are realms of light, and places of utter horror. Some are known only to Julian himself. Some, even he might not recognize—or control.

JAYLAN, JULIAN'S SHADOW

As the searchers travel farther into Arden, on Frakir's track, they will find themselves in darker and darker places. A full day's ride, driving their horses at a hard pace (or a walk of two or three days, stopping overnight at pleasant Arden inns), will take the characters to a place where foliage slowly darkens to greenish-black. The sunlight has a bloody tinge.

Finally, they will encounter a Shadow of Julian's. He wears glossy black armor, a mirror to Julian's. His hawks appear as Julian's but with a flash of red instead of green. Jaylan's hellhounds, except for being a bit smaller and a bit more gaunt, are just as Julian's. Jaylan's steed, which he calls "Morning Star," is a ghostly pale twin to Morgenstern. This Shadow of Julian has his own powers, which include forms of Power Words, Sorcery (he can, for example, cast a spell to return if he is removed from his home Shadow), and Conjunction, as well as a number of artifacts of local power.

Jaylan's foresters, almost human except for their narrow faces and pointed ears, will be both mounted and on foot, in the forest all around. They speak their own soft tongue,

but seem to understand Thari.

This Jaylan knows of Julian, Prince of Amber. As prideful as Julian, Jaylan will be disdainful of comparisons. He has no wish to meet Julian, nor does he have the ability to leave his own version of Forest Arden. He will call his own forest "the True Arden," and takes offense at those who would call it a Shadow or something else unflattering.

Jaylan's land is as rich and varied as any in Shadow. At the edges of the forest, many days travel away in any direction, there are distant kingdoms, far mountains and oceans. In the heart of his own domain (which is, on a Shadow route, closest to Amber's Arden), he rules over small fiefdoms, villages of woodsmen and forest dwellers, plus those he calls the "light ones," races of fairie who are rarely seen.

Dealing with Jaylan is no more predictable than dealing with Julian. His hawks and scouts will quickly bring news of intruders, and he will confront any of them fearlessly. He will not recognize the travelers, not even Julian's children or close followers. He does not take well to "orders" from someplace called Amber, or from a King called Random. Mention of someone called "Merlin" will provoke his rage, since his most bitter enemy, a sorcerer of the dark Arden, wears that name.

If treated with respect, he may even be of some small assistance. If there is any friction, he's most likely to simply allow them the freedom to pass through his realm. Jaylan will not hesitate to attack those who threaten his domain, usually by retreating to the dark of the woods, rallying his forces, and then attacking in strength.

Eventually, if the searchers are free to continue, more quickly if they manage to get help from Jaylan, the path through Shadow will lead to even darker realms.

THE WALL OF MIST

As the characters Push ahead through Shadow, Arden will grow almost night-black, even in daylight. Finally, the searchers will come to a wall of dark mist.

Walking into the mist is easy. It's just that there seems no end to it. Try walking out, even after hours of travelling, and a moment later you come right back where you started. It's pretty obvious to anyone who knows Pattern that this is a barred Shadow.

FINDING THE KEY

There are two ways into the barred Shadow.

First, whoever created it has built in a key. This might be a thought, to be concentrated on while walking through, or a word that must be said, or an item that must be carried. Finding out which will involve either some very clever use of powers, or getting the information from whoever put the thing together.

The other way in is really simple. Since the Shadow is a trap for Merlin, it's designed to admit anyone with Merlin's Psychic signature. The group has at least two

things with Merlin's Psyche built in—the wand (which radiates a “Merlin” feeling for Frakir) and the Trump of Merlin. Again, how characters might discover this knowledge, and how they might use it, is a up to the players. Pattern Initiates, Logrus Masters, Trump Artists, Shape Shifters, Conjurers and Sorcerers all have their own unique solutions.

If the characters have managed to enlist Jaylan's aid, or if they track him down once again, he'll suggest that they attempt contacting the “light ones,” a race of fairie. These magical people, who will come in response to a ceremony that Jaylan is capable of conducting, might be witnesses to whoever built the Shadow barrier, and may have seen others crossing over.

MERLIN'S TRAP SHADOW

Assuming the searchers get through the mist, they will still have to deal with the contents of the barred Shadow. The contents of the Shadow depend on who set the trap for Merlin...

POSSIBLE RESOLUTIONS

JULIAN'S MISCHIEF

Julian has met Luke, and knows him as Caine's assassin. On that occasion, Merlin went out of his way to show himself as Luke's friend and partisan. Not given to trust in the best of circumstances, Julian now has his reasons for testing Merlin.

This does not amount to motivation for a full-scale vendetta against Merlin, but he will welcome a chance to annoy or inconvenience Merlin, especially if it brings Julian more information.

So Julian has arranged for it to appear as if Frakir wandered out into one of the worst Shadows of Arden. Julian visits occasionally, exerting his influence on the contents and destiny of the Shadow, setting it up so that Merlin will have a most “interesting” time if he visits. It also amuses him to exert his influence on Jaylan and the dark Arden Shadow, making it ever stronger and more of a threat to others. Or it might be that Julian himself enjoys masquerading as Jaylan.

The dark forest is crisscrossed with the webs of giant spiders, and there are groves completely choked with webs. Sensing for Frakir will result in instant success! It is certain that Frakir is within one of the groves, where the hordes of spiders wait to swarm over unwary victims. Their bites cause paralysis. Anyone who is paralyzed will be dragged away, if possible, and hung from one of the

trees within the grove to be eaten later.

Or, if someone senses for Frakir near one of the other groves, those not hung with webs, it will be obvious that Frakir is within. Black-haired dryads inhabit the trees, and disport themselves with the satyrs who are their mates. The satyrs are armed with bows and spears, and each of the dryads knows at least one spell or power word. Entering a dryad grove is an invitation to mayhem.

Tribes of black-maned centaurs wander the forest, hunting, and sometimes raiding the dryad groves. They are armed like the satyrs, but they tip their weapons with spider venom. Some of them are spell-casters. Nearing their village, anyone sensing for Frakir will feel that the strangling cord is nearby. While the centaurs may be cautious about strangers out in the open, they'll view an approach to their village as an attack, throwing themselves against the intruders.

Obviously, the presence of Frakir is everywhere, in the depths of the most dangerous parts of this dark Shadow.

Leaving is no picnic either. This is a place designed to admit Merlin, not release him. And the entry key is different from the exit key.

And where is Frakir? In Julian's saddlebags, of course. There it sits, barred from all contact. Julian will keep it for as long as he finds it useful, treating it as a useful piece of bait, to be laid down wherever he wishes Merlin to follow.

Those who seek Julian can usually Trump him, either in Arden, where he will be hunting or tending to his duties, or back in Amber. If confronted with accusations, either of stealing Frakir, or of constructing Merlin's Trap Shadow, he'll respond:

“Do you have any evidence for this wild story? I think not. This is a complete fabrication. Get out of here, and leave me alone.”

If pushed further, or confronted with real evidence, Julian will offer the following:

“This is a matter between Merlin and myself. It does not concern any of you. If you wish to pursue it further, we may take our argument out in Arden. Or, if you must meddle, and have no stomach for battle, I suppose you could whine to Random.”

The player characters, of course, can take the matter up with Random. If so, and if they are even moderately convincing, then Random will deal with Julian directly.

If they are correct, Julian will surrender Frakir to Random, sulking that he did what he thought necessary for Amber's security. Noal will be very suspicious, and press the matter as far as he can.

On the other hand, if they are wrong, and if Julian is not involved (as may well be the case), they may cause a rift between Julian and Random that will have far-reaching consequences.

ALTERNATE TO JULIAN'S MISCHIEF: THE FRAME-UP

Everything is as if Julian were the agent of Frakir's discomfort, and creator of Merlin's Trap Shadow.

However, the real culprit is another elder Amberite.

It may be Fiona. As a ploy to embarrass her dear brother, she dragged the bait, set the trap, and even, as something of a joke, lent a bit more punch to Jaylan's Shadow. All easy, for a Pattern Mistress of Fiona's skills.

It's fine with Fiona if Frakir is eventually rescued and returned to Merlin. She has nothing in particular against Merlin. The important thing is that suspicion should be cast on Julian. A perfect cap to her plans would be to have Frakir "discovered" on Julian's person, or in his saddlebags, just at the moment when his denials are at their greatest.

Or it might not be Fiona. Anyone who dislikes Julian—a rather long list—and who swings a fair amount of power could be the one.

THE COURTS OF CHAOS

Everything is the same. The characters track Frakir through Shadow, encounter Jaylan, and the barred Shadow. If they manage to slip inside, even then it will appear the same, right down to the spiders and the false sense of Frakir.

The difference is that this Shadow is an artifact of the Courts of Chaos.

As it turns out, leaving Frakir behind was more than the loss of a loyal artifact. Since it was Frakir that Merlin bore with him through the Logrus, and later across the Pattern, the link between them is more than casual. Frakir is a link to Merlin, another approach to controlling him utterly.

The problem is, how to keep Merlin from searching in the Courts of Chaos, and point the finger back at Amber?

Creating a path through Shadow, and a Shadow where searching for Frakir is time-consuming and inconclusive, not only buys time, but may actually spread dissension in Amber circles.

If Noal is used, then he could even be an agent of this conspiracy, and he may be the first to point the finger at Julian.

SUCCESS

Assuming the player characters succeed in obtaining Frakir, they have only to call Merlin by Trump. As to what happens then... Well, it could be that Merlin will be in some small bit of trouble, and so starts the next story. All that is known for certain is that, at first opportunity, Frakir will twine happily onto Merlin's wrist...

PLOT SUMMARIES FOR ROGER ZELAZNY'S CHRONICLES OF AMBER

by Mark Jason Durall

CORWIN'S CHRONICLES

Here's a condensed version of the ten books which make up Roger Zelazny's stories about Corwin of Amber, and his son, Merlin of the Courts of Chaos. They are provided here as a reminder and outline for Gamemasters and players who want to know what happened when and to whom, and to help those wanting to find a particular passage.

The first five books in *The Chronicles of Amber* are *Nine Princes in Amber*, *The Guns of Avalon*, *Sign of the Unicorn*, *The Hand of Oberon* and *The Courts of Chaos*. Remember that the narrator is Prince Corwin, hardly an impartial observer...



NINE PRINCES IN AMBER

Carl Corey awakens in the Greenwood Hospital, his legs in heavy casts. He remembers nothing, not even his own name. He soon learns that he had broken both his legs and suffered internal injuries in an auto accident only two weeks previously. Either somebody is lying, or he heals very quickly. He breaks off the plaster, overcomes a beefy orderly, and releases himself on his own authority. Along the way he learns his name, picks up money, a gun and the address of the woman, his sister, who checked him into the hospital.

Within hours he arrives in upstate New York, at the residence of Evelyn flaumel, beautiful, calculating, and more than a little surprised to see him. Bits of memory come back, as he feigns confidence, and as he plays on her suspicions.

His own name, he learns, is really Corwin, and she is really his little sister Florimel, often called Flora. She mentions various horrors coming from "the Shadows." After speaking with her for a time, he hears the names Eric, Julian, Caine, and Bleys. Somehow he knows them to be his brothers, and he can recall a family filled with hatreds, games, and rivalries. When Flora mentions someplace called Amber, Corwin almost drops his drink. She asks him if he's going to try for "it" questioning him as to his motives and his plans. Corwin is evasive, and gives her little to report to their brother Eric, whom he hates for some reason.

The following morning, while Florimel is away and he is alone to snoop around, Corwin searches the library. He realizes that he has been a surgeon, and, when he sees an antique saber on the wall, he knows that he is skilled with weapons. In her desk, Corwin finds a deck of mysterious cards, strange, cold Tarots decorated with the figure of a Unicorn upon the back. He breaks out in a sweat when he sees them. The "Greater Trump" of the deck features several men and women dressed in medieval garb. Looking at them, he realizes that he knows their names; Random, Julian, Caine, Eric, Benedict, Gérard, Bleys, Brand. He knows them all, because they are family to him, his brothers. A card bearing his likeness is among their ranks, dressed similarly in colors of black, grey, and silver. A few more cards show his sisters Florimel, Deirdre, Fiona, and Llewella. They are all part of Amber.

Corwin's examination of the cards is interrupted by lunch and then by a telephone call from his brother, Random. Random asks for sanctuary and Corwin agrees to protect him when he arrives.

Flora arrives, complaining that she had failed in an attempt to walk "The Road to Amber." When she hears that he has looked through her Trumps, she reacts with anger and fear. He claims that he is going to try whatever it is that she has been hinting about, and her mood shifts from hostility to awe and admiration. Their talk is interrupted by the arrival of Random, their brother.

Random's pursuers, six inhuman men from Shadow, attack the house. Corwin, Random, and Florimel kill them easily, revealing to Corwin that he and his siblings possess incredible strength, speed, and skill with weapons.

Afterwards, still not wanting to reveal his lost memory, Corwin plays along with a subtle conversation. Whatever "it" is, Corwin still has no idea, but he agrees that he's going for it, and Random wants in on the action.

The next day, he and Random leave in Flora's Mercedes, travelling through a landscape that changes into something increasingly strange as they drive on. Corwin realizes that they are shifting reality. They are moving through Shadow, and Random is attempting to match the details of the shifting landscape to arrive at Amber. Each of the multitude of places they pass are a bit more like Amber. There are several obstacles, but they pass them. When their car runs into some mud, Random and Corwin lift it and carry it to the side of the road, proving to Corwin that their strength is far greater than human.

They ride into the forest called Arden, compared to which all other forests are a mere inkling. Driving fast, they encounter a group of hunting hounds of incredible fury led by a man who rides a horse with the speed and power of a hurricane. It is Julian, their brother.

During the following high-speed chase they find that the dogs are capable of ripping off bumpers, and that both Julian's armor and horse are invulnerable to bullets. Slamming on the brakes, Corwin manages to overpower Julian.

With Julian as prisoner they pass by the guards in Forest Arden, continuing toward Amber. Julian tells them that Eric is in charge. Eric's allies are Caine and Gérard, who defend Amber by sea, and he, the Warden of Arden. Once past the guards, they release Julian.

Corwin finds himself speaking the language of Amber, *Thari*, and a ballad comes to his lips. He sees that his clothing has changed to match his image in the Trumps. In the back seat he finds his silver sword, his black cloak, and his pin of a silver rose. Random's attire has also changed to match his card.

When their car runs out of gas, they resume their journey on foot, heading towards some mountain about thirty-five miles distant. In the woods, they come across a camp of Eric's men who hold a prisoner, their sister Deirdre.

After they kill the guards and free her, Deirdre tells them that she had tried to escape from Amber, and that every step of the way back is trapped.

When he learns that the "it," the thing he agreed to try for, is the throne of Amber, Corwin admits that his memory is gone.

While they plan what to do, they are attacked by a group of half-human, half-wolf servants of Eric's called *Weir*, and then are chased by mounted soldiers. Running

to the beach, they enter the water, and head down a stairway into the deep. In this place, called Rebma, they can breathe underwater, and they are taken by pale men of Rebma, whom Eric's men will not challenge.

In the depths they come to a city, and Castle Rebma, a mirror image of Castle Amber above the water. To Queen Moire of Rebma, Corwin announces his desire to walk the Pattern in Rebma, which is a reflection of Amber's own Pattern.

It turns out that Random had, many years before, dishonored and abandoned Queen Moire's daughter Morganthë. After bearing Random's child, a son named Martin, Morganthë killed herself. Random's punishment is that he will remain in Rebma, and marry a blind woman named Vialle.

After an afternoon's dalliance with Moire, Corwin and his siblings go into the basement of Rebma, where the Pattern is inscribed. It is a design of great power, etched into the floor. He walks this Pattern and has his memory restored.

Corwin then uses the Rebma Pattern to teleport himself to the center of the Pattern in the basement of Castle Amber. From there he teleports into a hidden room where he sleeps for a time. Using a secret passageway Corwin sneaks into the Castle Library, and steals a deck of Trumps.

Eric arrives, and Corwin confronts him in a sword battle. After being wounded, Eric switches to a defensive stance, and calls for reinforcements. Corwin uses the Trump of his brother Bleys to escape Amber.

Bleys has massed an army in his personal Shadow Avernus, and is planning to seize the throne of Amber. After making a deal with Bleys, Corwin recruits an army of his own out of Shadow, and becomes a partner in the assault on Amber.

Corwin contacts Caine and cuts a deal which will allow the attacking fleet to pass through to Amber. Another Trump call, this time to Gérard, who promises to keep out of the way. Corwin tries contacting Brand, but hears only a mysterious cry for help before the Trump contact is cut off. Wondering how Oberon, his father, Lord of Amber, could be dead, he makes a contact. Barely able to communicate, Oberon tells Corwin to take the throne for himself, with his blessing.

Corwin and Bleys begin their move on Amber, Bleys with their troops by land, and Corwin leading their navies across the Shadow-seas. In their struggle to reach Amber, they suffer enormous losses to hostile Shadow beings and seemingly natural forces. In a last-minute Trump contact, Random reveals to Corwin that Eric, wielding Oberon's *Jewel of Judgement*, has control of the weather and is responsible for the natural disasters that are decimating the attacking forces. Random tells them that they have no chance, but Corwin vows to continue.

Breaking the agreement, Caine arrives with his fleet and attacks Corwin with superior numbers. While Corwin's ship is under attack, Corwin receives a hostile Trump

contact from Eric. Corwin locks wills in a psychic battle with Eric, but is unable to move or defend himself physically. Although Corwin is victorious, and forces Eric to end the connection, Caine has meanwhile destroyed the last of Corwin's fleet.

Corwin flees, Trumping to Bleys, whose luck has been equally bad. Their army is down from over a quarter million to a hundred and eighty thousand. By the time they emerge from Forest Arden, to the steps of Mount Kolvir, Corwin and Bleys are down to three thousand troops.

Fighting up the narrow stairway that winds up the sheer side of the mountain Bleys kills and kills and kills, a red and orange whirlwind of steel and death, until, nearly at the top, he is dragged off the stair by a dying soldier. Throwing Bleys his deck of Trump, Corwin realizes that he has also thrown away his own means of escape.

Hours later, having carried the battle all the way into Amber, Corwin loses the last of his men and is beaten into submission.

A prisoner, Corwin is forced to watch while Eric crowns himself. Corwin is then blinded, his eyes burnt from his head with hot irons. While this happens, Corwin lays his blood-curse upon the new king, vowing that Eric shall never know peace as king of Amber.

Corwin is left to rot in the dungeons of Amber.

After a time, Lord Rein, a minstrel and knight still loyal to Corwin, brings food and tells of recent family news. Corwin learns that Random tried to kill Eric, and was captured and imprisoned, and was eventually joined by his Rebman wife, Vialle.

Corwin spends the next few years in prison, until, one day, he notices a spot of light. The unthinkable has happened—his eyes are regenerating. His vision begins to recover, his eyes healing rapidly. Since Corwin is brought out of his cell yearly, he must escape, or he may be blinded all over again. Corwin plots and schemes, and spends his days digging at the massive door with his only tool, a sharpened spoon.

One day he hears a chuckle from behind him. Turning, Corwin is surprised to find another person in his cell. It is Dworkin, Master of the Trumps and ancient advisor to Oberon. Thought mad, imprisoned, or dead, Dworkin has not been seen in Amber for centuries. Dworkin has taken a wrong turn somewhere, and ended up in this cell.

Corwin talks Dworkin into drawing a pair of Trump on the walls of his cell. One, a picture of Dworkin's chambers, and the other a sketch of the Lighthouse of Cabra, some forty-three miles south of Amber.

Escaping from his cell, Corwin spends three months recovering his strength. He plays chess and swaps stories with the lighthouse keeper, a retired sailor named Jopin. He also looks through a telescope into the Valley of Garnath between Arden and Amber, and sees it has been transformed from a once-peaceful vale into a dark and haunted place, perhaps by the power of his own blood-curse.

As Corwin sails off to Shadow, on a sailboat borrowed from Jopin, Corwin summons a pair of birds and sends two messages. One bird he sends ahead to his destination to announce his coming. The other bird is sent back to his brother Eric warning him of his eventual return.



THE GUNS OF AVALON

Arriving in a Shadow he calls Lorraine, Corwin finds six dead men and one wounded knight. Corwin recognizes the knight, and can put a name to him, Lance.

Corwin introduces himself as Corey, and helps the knight by tending his wounds, and supplying him with food and drink. He builds a cairn for the dead men, revealing his awesome strength to the knight. The dead men, it seems, were soldiers of the Wardens of the Dark Circle, a mystical area which blights the land.

Carrying the knight back to his allies, Corwin meets a pair of demon cats, tiger-sized, which speak and call Corwin the "Opener." He kills them both and continues on his way.

They arrive at the Keep of Ganelon. Ganelon, Corwin remembers, betrayed him once and was cast into Shadow for his crimes. Just as the knight, Sir Lancelot du Lac, does not recognize Corwin, neither does Ganelon. Both of them may, or may not, be Shadows of the men he knew in a Shadow once ruled by Corwin, Shadow Avalon.

Safe in the Keep of Ganelon, Corwin begins to exercise again and try to regain his skills and health lost in his imprisonment. He spends long days in swordsmanship, wrestling, archery, and other weapons-work, interspersed with gigantic meals and long, black lengths of sleep. He speaks to Ganelon, who tells of Avalon, and of its Sorcerer Lord, Corwin.

Ganelon then tells Corwin about the Dark Circle, which began as a ring of toadstools, a dead little girl inside and her dying father found near it. It grew in power and darkness, becoming a gate for soulless humans and creatures of nightmare. Eventually, Ganelon joined forces with others, and fought against the things from the Dark Circle, taking arms personally against its leader, a goat-headed creature riding a piebald stallion.

While they speak, a white bird flies in the window and lands on Corwin's shoulder. It is the bird he sent from the boat outside Cabra. Ganelon reads the message, "I am coming," and its signature, "Corwin."

Corwin also befriends a woman named Lorraine. In his room, as they drink wine together, she reveals that it was her husband who found the toadstool ring, and her daughter that died inside it. They are first interrupted by a Trump contact that Corwin resists, and which Lorraine identifies as coming from Oberon. Still that night, they are visited by a creature from Chaos, a horned, grey-skinned being named Strygalldwir, who is killed by Corwin.

Soon after, the forces of Ganelon march into battle against the hellish creatures. Corwin shaves his beard, puts on his colors of grey and black, fastens his silver rose at his throat, and buckles his sword Grayswandir at his side.

"I wonder about Corwin," says Ganelon.

"He is with us," answers Corwin.

In the climax of the battle Corwin faces the goat-headed creature. It is a Lord of Chaos, and when Corwin fights it,

it recognizes him and offers him the help of the Courts of Chaos in reclaiming the Throne of Amber. Corwin kills it and, with its death, the Dark Circle's power is ended in that Shadow.

Afterwards Corwin tells Ganelon of his plans. With his recovered memory Corwin has recalled that there is a substance in Avalon, something used by jewelers, that could be used as ammunition for an assault upon Amber. Since regular gunpowder doesn't work in Amber, this would be an unmatched secret weapon. Ganelon decides to accompany Corwin on his voyage to Avalon and to Amber.

Lorraine, brought up on tales of the cruelty of Lord Corwin, flees from him with a man named Melkin. Corwin goes off looking for Lorraine, but too late. She has been killed, her jewelry stolen. Corwin buries her, and throws the broken body of Melkin into a high oak tree.

In the company of Ganelon, Corwin continues toward Shadow Avalon, and encounters a thief who tells them that Avalon has been under siege by a legion of demon women. He even says that the "Protector" spent part of a night with Lintra, leader of the Hellmaids.

Corwin and Ganelon then encounter the army of the Protector of Avalon, who turns out to be Corwin's missing brother Benedict, Master of Arms in Amber, the greatest warrior in existence. Although he had defeated the local version of the Black Circle, Benedict came away from the battle without his right arm.

Corwin tells Benedict the story of how he came to be stranded on Shadow Earth. It seems that Eric had defeated Corwin in a private fight, and that Eric had then left the injured Corwin in the plague-stricken London of Earth. From that day on, for hundreds of years, Corwin had no memory of his previous life. Corwin says that the injuries suffered in an auto accident caused him to begin to remember things, until he woke up in Greenwood Hospital and went looking for Flora.

From Benedict, Corwin learns that Oberon did not abdicate the throne to Eric, as he had thought, but had simply disappeared one day without a word. Corwin surmises that Eric then arranged for Corwin to have an accident which was intended to be fatal. He tells Benedict the rest of his story. Benedict tells of the family's search for Corwin. The reasons varied; a mix of concern, and a desire for blackmail useful against Eric. While looking for Corwin in Avalon, Benedict found the place to his liking and stayed.

Benedict tells Corwin that he will neither help him or hinder him in battle against Eric and Amber.

As a guest in Benedict's house, Corwin is challenged by an attractive young woman in fencing garb. She knows him by name, though he is still using the name "Corey" here. She is an excellent swordswoman and, after they fight for awhile, she invites him to have a picnic lunch with her.

She introduces herself as Dara, and, when Corwin remarks on a family resemblance, she admits to being the great-granddaughter of Benedict. Taken with her youth and inexperience, Corwin tells her of Pattern, and of the family. From Dara he learns that Benedict had recently been visited by Julian and Gérard, wounded in battle with the forces of the Black Road, and that there had been visits from Brand as well.

When Corwin's business is complete, a wagon-load of jeweler's rouge paid for with diamonds, he returns for a last visit to Benedict's house. Ganelon, sore from an encounter with Dara, informs Corwin of a new mystery; several fresh-killed bodies hastily buried nearby.

Investigating the grave site, Corwin meets Dara, who urges him to win against Eric so that she might see Amber and walk the Pattern herself. They make love.

While leaving Avalon, Corwin and Ganelon keep encountering the Black Road, despite Corwin's efforts to escape it by shifting Shadow. On the Black Road, he has a hallucinatory battle with a group of half-men menacing a woman with no face, who cries out the prophecy that Amber must be destroyed. Ganelon is caught by a large clump of animate black grass from the Road, until freed by Corwin. Crossing the Black Road, Corwin calls the Pattern to mind, and this erases the segment they are upon, restoring the trail to normal.

Awaking Corwin from a nap, Ganelon points to a horseman approaching. It is Benedict, riding as if the devil were at his back. Unable to Shadowride out of his way, Corwin draws his blade and waits for the one man in the universe whom he knows can kill him with a sword.

Corwin thinks that Benedict is angry for what happened with Dara, but Benedict is accusing Corwin of murder. They cross blades, and, with the help of trickery, dirty fighting, and a patch of the animate grass, Corwin knocks Benedict unconscious and leaves him tied to a tree. He then Trumps Gérard to the scene, leaving him to explain things to Benedict while he and Ganelon escape.

On Shadow Earth, Corwin orders special ammunition (cartridges with silver bullets and jeweler's rouge), and buys a large shipment of automatic rifles.

In a Trump conversation Corwin asks Gérard about Benedict's accusation. It turns out that the buried corpses were actually Benedict's servants, and Benedict claimed he had never heard of Dara. Gérard asks Corwin not to attack Amber, but Corwin simply warns him to stay out of the way.

Corwin returns to his old home in New York. Amid the wreckage left by vandals and thieves, Corwin finds his prized Japanese woodcut untouched on the wall. Puzzled, Corwin opens his safe, and finds a message from Eric. Along with an explanation for the care of the woodcut, Eric asks Corwin to put aside their differences for the sake of the kingdom, and offers a truce.

Ignoring the offer, Corwin takes Ganelon and the new rifles through Shadow to raise another army. Training them in marksmanship and soldiering, Corwin marches on

Amber again, encountering strange beasts in Arden.

By the time he arrives Corwin finds Amber under siege from the creatures of Chaos, the forces of the Black Road. Eric, Gérard, Benedict, Julian, and Caine defend Amber. Dara appears then, on horseback, passing Corwin and his men, intent on walking the Pattern.

Torn by indecision, Corwin elects to lead his riflemen against the enemies of Amber and pursue his own quest for revenge later. His action turns the course of the battle and Amber is victorious.

At battle's end, Eric, mortally wounded in the defense of Amber, is brave and selfless in the face of death. He gives Corwin instructions on the use of their father's Jewel of Judgement, and then leaves his death-curse upon the enemies of Amber.

After speaking with Benedict, Corwin realizes that Dara was lying to him. He Trumps to Random's side in Amber, and rushes down to the Pattern, but arrives too late, with Dara already walking the Pattern. She is revealed as a shapechanger of Chaos as she traverses the design of power, turning to Corwin when she reaches the center, and announcing, "Amber will be destroyed." Then she vanishes.

SIGN OF THE UNICORN

The story resumes a week after the battle for Amber.

Corwin confronts Random with a corpse. Not a human corpse, but the body of one of the creatures that had followed Random to Florimel's house on Shadow Earth.

Explaining the situation to Random, Corwin tells of how he received a note from Caine suggesting a rendezvous in Forest Arden. However, by the time Corwin arrived Caine was already dead, and Corwin killed the creature in self-defense. On Caine's body Corwin found a note similar to his own, with Corwin's own forged signature.

Having hidden Caine's body, Corwin now demands that Random tell the story of their meeting on Shadow Earth.

Random says that he had been relaxing in a Shadow called Texorami, drumming, playing cards, sail-planing, and wenching, when he got a strange Trump contact from Brand asking for help.

Not trusting anyone else, Random went hang-gliding through Shadow, seeking Brand. He finally came to a strange tower, defended by the mysterious creatures and a crystalline serpent. He killed the snake but, outnumbered, had to flee from the other creatures.

The creatures proved capable of pursuing Random through Shadow, and they followed him all the way to Shadow Earth. The pursuit continued to Florimel's house, and Corwin.

Unable to point to a guilty party, Corwin takes a break and walks the Pattern again, this time to become an Initiate of the Jewel of Judgement. At the center, he enters the Jewel with his mind, projecting himself within it and walking the higher-octave Pattern which it contains.

His next step is to interrogate Flora. She reveals that she was living in Shadow Earth Paris when she ran across the amnesiac Corwin at a party. She contacted Eric, who asked her to remain and keep an eye on Corwin. A great deal later, Eric contacted her in Westchester and told her that Corwin had been in an accident, and that he was to be transferred to a private hospital and kept under heavy sedation. Eric knew that Corwin had been in a traffic accident in which someone had shot out his car tire. The interview comes to an end when Flora begins to cry, pleading that she knows nothing more.

That night, Corwin goes out to drink and eat with Ganelon at the site of his own tomb, erected by his brothers and sisters when they gave him up for dead. They discuss the military and political situation. Ganelon asks Corwin if it is possible to eavesdrop on the Trumps, but Corwin isn't sure.

The next morning, Corwin and Gérard go to recover Caine's body. They stop in a basin close to it and dismount, Gérard ordering Corwin to face him in combat. They fight unarmed, and Corwin is beaten unconscious, waking to find himself dangled over a cliffside, held by the powerful Gérard. Gérard tells him that the others are

watching on Trumps, and warns then that Corwin is not trusted. Gérard issues his ultimatum, that he will kill Corwin if anyone else dies in Amber.

Later, while unearthing Caine's body, Corwin and Gérard see the Unicorn itself, a sign of good fortune and an omen for things come to come.

All the siblings meet in the library of Castle Amber that night. They are divided into two camps. Corwin attracts Random, Deirdre, Fiona, and Flora, while Gérard, Benedict, Julian, and Llewella stand opposed. Eventually, however, Corwin's majority holds, and none stand against him.

After Random's story has been related, Corwin suggests that they try to contact Brand, in a combined effort of Trumps. Combining their wills, they reach Brand, chained in his place of imprisonment. Gérard and Random go forth to free him, Random battling Brand's captors, and Gérard using his incredible strength to pull the chain from the wall.

Returning triumphant, Gérard carrying Brand, the mood changes instantly. One of their own number stuck a dagger into Brand's side during the confusion. Gérard, the one who had been carrying Brand, and the only one above suspicion, orders everyone from the room and becomes Brand's physician and protector.

Retreating, the others gather to cast accusations and question each other. Llewella tells that Brand had visited her in Rebma, seeking information on Random's son Martin, who disappeared after walking the Pattern there. Random concurs, announcing that Brand was similarly interested in Martin. Gérard tells of seeing Oberon the night before his disappearance, and he was certain that he wore the Jewel of Judgement. Flora tells of Oberon's disappearance, which was connected to the creatures of Shadow coming into Amber, before the appearance of the Black Road.

Benedict says that Julian and Gérard had once asked him for help in Shadow Avalon, when they did battle while scouting the Black Road. This agrees with Dara's story, but Benedict does not confirm Dara's claims that he was visited by Brand.

When Julian departs, Fiona says that she believes that Julian is guilty of stabbing Brand. She also warns Corwin about the Jewel of Judgement's powers, claiming that it saps the life-force of those who wear it, draining their vitality, affecting their time-sense, and eventually killing them. Since her examination of Eric's body, she suspects his death was due more to the Jewel than his injuries, though she was prevented by Caine from doing a proper autopsy.

Corwin returns to his room. As he opens the door, he experiences the time-distortion of the Jewel of Judgement, moments before a hidden knifeman strikes him in the side with a dagger. As it is, he is almost killed as the blade strikes deep. He collapses into

unconsciousness, the red of the Pattern in the Jewel swimming before him.

He wakes up in his bed on Shadow Earth, bleeding and half dead. He stumbles outside, buries the Jewel of Judgement in a compost heap for safekeeping, then staggers to the roadside. A car pulls up, driven by Bill Roth, his old friend, neighbor and attorney.

Recovering in the hospital, Corwin learns about the events leading up to the recovery of his memory. There had been a stay in another sanitarium, where he had been admitted under suspicious circumstances; and, later, a near-fatal auto accident. It seems that both Brand and Flora were involved in some way.

Examining Corwin's Trumps, Bill Roth eventually asks if Corwin is truly human. Corwin, after a pause, answers truthfully that he is probably not, and is reassured by Bill that it really doesn't matter.

After a day of rest, Random Trumps Corwin home, telling him that Julian has fled the castle, and Brand, recovered, is demanding to speak with Corwin.

The conversation with Brand is frustrating to Corwin, since Brand seems intent on getting as much as possible while revealing little. From the beginning Brand says that he knows who stabbed him, but he first describes how he conspired with two others, Bleys and Fiona, to remove Oberon and take the throne. He claims that he was outvoted, and that his cabal formed an alliance with the Black Road forces. After Oberon was removed, they had planned on putting Bleys on the throne, but Eric blocked them, and they failed to swing Caine or Julian away from Eric. Brand says that he tried restoring Corwin's memories through shock treatment on Shadow Earth after breaking from the cabal, and also claims to have rescued Corwin after the car crash. Finally he says that Fiona was the one who stabbed him when he was rescued, and that she and Bleys had been his captors.

That night, Corwin goes to Tir-na Nog'th, the reflection of Amber within the sky just as Rebma is its reflection beneath the sea, seeking answers in this place of prophecies. He wanders through the city of dreams and portents, meeting Lorraine, who takes him for another Corwin, a Corwin who moved quickly enough to save her, and who prevented Eric's death.

In the ghostly reflection of the throne room, he finds a Dara who claims to be Queen of Amber, guarded by a Benedict who wears a mechanical arm. A battle follows, though only Corwin's sword Grayswandir can reach the ghosts, and only Benedict's artificial hand can touch Corwin. As Tir-na Nog'th fades with the daylight Corwin escapes into a Trump contact with Random, taking the severed arm of Benedict along.

Corwin, Random and Ganelon ride back toward Amber with the mechanical arm as proof of the vision. While riding, Corwin recites the genealogy of the House of Amber, explaining to Ganelon why he feels he is the legitimate candidate for the throne.

As they ride, they realize that they are not on the

Kolvir in the Amber they know. The impossible has happened. They have Shadow-shifted on Amber itself, and cannot shift back. As Amber is the only true reality, it should be impossible to manipulate it. They try to use the Trumps to escape, but the Trumps are lifeless. Riding further, they see the Unicorn briefly, but it flees. They ride further, until the land is slightly familiar, and they see a startling sight.

The mountain before them, which they know as Kolvir, has been cut off evenly at the level of the dungeon floor, which holds the Pattern. Into this smooth rock is a duplicate of their Pattern. However the Pattern has been damaged, stained with black lines that remind them of the Black Road which leads to Amber. They realize that it is the true Pattern, and that the Pattern in Amber is merely the first reflection of a Primal Pattern.



THE HAND OF OBERON

Exploring this new Pattern, Corwin, Ganelon, and Random discover that the Pattern is blotched in the center, a marking which corresponds exactly with the Black Road's intrusion into Amber. While Random and Corwin debate what to do, Ganelon sprints across the black areas of the Pattern, recovering a small item at the center of the blotch. The object turns out to be two things: a Trump card, pierced by a bloody dagger.

A beast comes from a nearby cave, a purple griffin which has been chained to guard the Pattern. It seems friendly to Corwin and Bleys, but scares the horses, and Random's horse flees onto the Pattern and is destroyed.

Ganelon suggests a test. They let a drop of Random's blood fall upon the Pattern. It destroys a small piece of the Pattern, turning it black like the rest of the damage. It would seem that the large stain near the center was caused by a great amount of Amberite blood. Examining the Trump again, they realize it is likely the source of the blood. They also realize that the picture is of Random's missing son, Martin.

Corwin contacts Benedict with the Trumps, and Benedict brings them through to a vantage point high upon Kolvir in their Amber. Apparently, the Black Road is stabilizing, as if readying itself for some invading force. Random announces his determination to find his son or take revenge upon the killer. They explain to Benedict what has happened, and Benedict leaves with Random on his search.

Back home, Corwin goes to inform Vialle about her husband's whereabouts. Because Vialle is a perceptive, inquisitive listener it is the first pleasant experience Corwin has had in some time, and he lets his guard down and speaks freely with the blind woman. Corwin admits that he does not seek the throne for its power, that it is more of a prize between he and Eric. Corwin also reluctantly admits that his reasons for defending Amber are based on abstractions like duty and honor.

Corwin next investigates the Trump sketches drawn by Dworkin in his old cell. He transports himself into the sorcerer's study and meets Dworkin, who mistakes him for Oberon, shape-changed into Corwin's form.

Going along with Dworkin's apparent madness, he then sees Dworkin change his form into Corwin, showing a talent for Shape Shifting.

Dworkin reveals that he transcribed the Pattern after escaping from Chaos, using the Jewel of Judgement, and that the recent damage to the Pattern is reflected within his brain. He also reveals that Oberon is the child of he and the Unicorn. His solution is to destroy himself at the center of the Pattern, and then have Oberon draw a new one in its place. It seems this process will destroy Amber.

Walking outside of Dworkin's chambers they end up at the Primal Pattern. Dworkin realizes that it is Corwin he speaks with, not Oberon. Dworkin tells him how repairs

might be attempted, and begins to go mad, his body changing into something fearsome. To escape, Corwin grabs a Trump from the desk and uses it to teleport himself away.

Which takes him to the Courts of Chaos.

Corwin realizes that he had beheld it before, as a boy, taken there by Oberon.

A strange rider on a hairless horse challenges him, and Corwin kills him. Another rider approaches, bearing a crossbow, and Corwin feels something strange upon beholding this man. The man recognizes Corwin's blade Grayswandir, and lets him go, with the admonition to remember him. Spying on the denizens of Chaos, Corwin sees them preparing for war, heading down the Black Road.

Corwin contacts Gérard by Trump and teleports back to Castle Amber. Although only a few hours have passed for Corwin, he has been missing for eight days, due to the time differential between Amber and Chaos.

Corwin then confronts Brand with the pierced Trump. Brand admits to stabbing Martin, also telling Corwin that Bleys is planning an attack on Amber, and that Fiona has gone over to Chaos. He urges Corwin to organize a group, Trump Bleys and Fiona in turn, and then kill them.

After eating, Corwin is contacted by a Trump sending from Ganelon, who has managed to pick up a deck somewhere. They meet shortly, and Corwin speaks to Benedict, who now wears the mechanical arm. Random, says Benedict, is still in Shadow seeking after Martin. Corwin gives Benedict the Trump of the Courts of Chaos, as a possible avenue for attack on Chaos.

Gérard arrives by Trump, enraged that Brand is missing, his chambers wrecked and spotted with blood. Demanding answers, Gérard is enraged when Corwin refuses to answer. Corwin is in for the beating of his life, until Ganelon steps in and punches Gérard unconscious.

On the way through Forest Arden, heading out into Shadow in search of the Jewel of Judgement, Corwin is pursued by a mantichora. His brother Julian slaughters the beast, and the two of them talk.

Julian explains that his alliance with Eric and Caine was formed solely to oppose the Bleys/Brand/Fiona cabal. Eric had only taken the throne as a measure of last resort, and the blinding Corwin had been Julian's idea. Julian also tells Corwin that he fears Brand's powers, and suspects that Brand has become a "living Trump."

Arriving at his old home on Shadow Earth, Corwin finds the compost heap missing, along with the buried Jewel of Judgement. He seeks out the help of Bill Roth, locates the missing heap, but finds that Brand has already taken the Jewel.

Hoping to prevent Brand from attuning himself to the Jewel, Corwin sets Gérard to guard the Pattern in Amber, and Llewella the Pattern in Rebma.

Fiona Trumps to Shadow Earth, and from there takes Corwin along a mysterious shortcut through Shadow to the Primal Pattern. As they travel, she explains that she and Bleys had only allowed Brand to live because they thought him to be the key to repairing the Pattern. She also says that Brand, reacting to a vision of Corwin when visiting Tir-na Nog'th, had tried to kill Corwin via the car crash back on Shadow Earth.

By the time they arrive at the Primal Pattern, Brand is already walking it. Corwin chases after him, blade in hand to kill his brother and end it all. Realizing that spilling Brand's blood on the Pattern will do even more damage, Corwin uses his influence over the close-by Jewel of Judgement to call storms and lightning. This forces Brand to teleport away.

Meeting Random and Martin at his tomb, Corwin hears Martin's story of Brand's assault, and of Martin's meeting with Dara. A Trump call from Ganelon interrupts their conversation, and they turn their attention to protecting the last remaining Pattern, the one at Tir-na Nog'th. Since Brand seems capable of instant travel, Ganelon has arranged for Benedict to walk to the center of the Pattern, ready to teleport directly to Tir-na Nog'th's Pattern as

soon as it appears in the sky.

Corwin rides to the base of the stairway and establishes a Trump contact with Benedict. When the moon reflection of Amber appears, Benedict teleports to Tir-na Nog'th's Pattern, just before Brand's appearance. Corwin, still in Trump contact, hears Brand describing his plan to erase the Pattern and replace it with one of his own making, with himself as the ruler. Brand, offering Benedict a deal, talks until he gets close enough to use the Jewel to freeze Benedict in place. Corwin, still observing, is unable to help as Brand moves in with a dagger. Suddenly Benedict's mechanical arm reaches out and chokes Brand with the chain about which hangs the Jewel. Brand breaks the chain, abandoning the Jewel of Judgement.

After retrieving Benedict from Tir-na Nog'th, the two of them, Corwin and Benedict, compare notes on the considerable chain of coincidences. They surmise that there must be a guiding force behind it all. Corwin proposes that it must be Oberon.

Benedict and Corwin attempt to contact their father's Trump. They are successful, and they find that Oberon has been with them all along, disguised as Ganelon.



THE COURTS OF CHAOS

Corwin, angry with Oberon, shuts himself up in the library. Finally admitting Random, he learns that Oberon has ordered Benedict to strike against the Courts of Chaos in an impossibly short three days time.

When Random finally coaxes Corwin out, they find a commotion in the throne room. While they can see into the room, no one seems to be able to enter. Corwin watches Dara and Benedict as the events of Tir-na Nog'th repeat themselves. Corwin's sword Grayswandir appears, floating in midair, even though the blade still hangs at Corwin's side. Mimicking Corwin's battle in Tir-na Nog'th, the sword slices off Benedict's new arm. Sword and arm disappear, and so does the barrier.

Martin explains that Dara wanted to visit Amber, so he Trumped her in, along with Benedict, who wanted to meet her. Corwin angrily examines Martin's Trumps, and finds several new ones, including one of the crossbow-wielding man who spared Corwin's life in Chaos. Not only is this man the artist who created the new Trumps, but he is also the son of Dara and Corwin, Merlin.

According to Dara, Brand had made a deal with the Courts of Chaos to overthrow and remake Amber. Their plan was to help him succeed, and then kill him and place Merlin upon the throne of Amber. Fearing that they would see Amber destroyed, rather than weakened, she rescued Oberon from Brand's trap. Dara then orders that Benedict attack immediately, claiming that she has the authority to do so.

Corwin, seeking confirmation, contacts Fiona. She is with Oberon and Dworkin at the Primal Pattern, and she tells them that Oberon is about to mend the Pattern, a process that will certainly result in his death. Trumping through, Corwin seizes the Jewel of Judgement from his father's neck and sprints for the Primal Pattern. Corwin intends to repair it himself, but he is paralyzed by Oberon.

Oberon and Corwin then have a private chat. Oberon admits to setting up the whole situation on Shadow Lorraine, and to having killed Benedict's servants. Oberon claims to have done all this so that Corwin will take the throne of Amber with Dara as his queen.

Corwin refuses. He tells his father that he does not wish to rule. Oberon is disappointed, and sends Corwin back to Amber.

Benedict Trumps to Chaos, to begin the attack. Gérard is to guard Amber. Random and Julian will wait in Arden. Dara has orders for the sisters, but she speaks to Corwin briefly, telling him that she likes him, despite having been ordered to seduce him and bear his child.

Oberon creates a bird from Corwin's blood, which will be used to carry the Jewel of Judgement after Oberon finishes his attempt at repairing the Primal Pattern. Oberon instructs Corwin to Shadowride as far away from Amber as is possible, and to await the bloodbird. Corwin

bids his father farewell, and departs.

Corwin follows the Black Road on his Hellride, and sees it waver. Then, on the edges of Shadow, the bloodbird delivers the Jewel of Judgement, and departs.

Brand shows up next, telling Corwin that Oberon died attempting to repair the Pattern. Brand asks for the Jewel of Judgement so that he might inscribe it in a new place and create a new Pattern before all is lost. Corwin denies him and drives Brand away.

Corwin's adventures get stranger and stranger. He takes refuge in a cave with a man who quotes the prophecies of the Archangel Corwin, drinks mead with leprechauns who try to kill him, and has lunch with a mysterious Lady. Riding on, he is ambushed by Brand. He loses his horse to Brand's crossbow, but Corwin's bloodbird arrives to save him, clawing out one of Brand's eyes.

At a giant tree, Corwin cuts a branch to serve as a walking stick. The tree complains out loud, and reveals that it is Ygg, planted by Oberon to mark the boundary between Order and Chaos. Hearing that Corwin is Oberon's son, Ygg confers a blessing and tells Corwin to plant the staff where it might grow.

The landscape growing ever more bizarre, Corwin next meets a black bird of ill omen, a giant, and a jackal.

Deciding it is necessary to inscribe a new Pattern, now that the original has been destroyed, Corwin does so. While he walks the new Pattern he recalls pleasant memories. He thinks of many things, but most strongly of his years in Paris on Shadow Earth.

Finished, he collapses with exhaustion at the center of his new Pattern. In Corwin's moment of weakness, Brand teleports in, attacks, and takes away the Jewel of Judgement. When Corwin awakes he is at the center of a fresh new Pattern, the staff at its beginning now a budding tree.

Teleporting to the Courts of Chaos, Corwin finds himself on the outskirts of the battle between Amber and Chaos. Seeking Brand, he is challenged by Duke Borel, the Master of Arms who had trained Dara. Borel sheds his armor, offering a fair fight, and Corwin responds by fleeing, and then ambushing the Lord of Chaos.

Corwin finds Brand at the edge of the Abyss, holding a dagger to Deirdre's throat, with Random and Fiona held at bay.

Then the sky fills with a giant image of Oberon, announcing that his attempt is finished, successful or not, and that Corwin must use the Jewel of Judgement to shelter them from the giant wave of Chaos coming for them. He leaves them his blessing.

Corwin reaches out through the Jewel to burn Brand, and Brand goes wild, cutting Deirdre. Deirdre pulls free, and a knight in green shoots Brand in the throat and chest with silver arrows. Brand topples over the edge into the Abyss, pulling Deirdre with him. Corwin attempts to

follow, and is subdued by Random.

When Corwin wakes, he finds that the man in green was Caine, still alive. Caine had faked his death with a Shadow duplicate, framing Corwin and spying on them all through their Trumps. It was he who stabbed Corwin in his room, thinking that Corwin was the guilty one who conspired against Amber.

The war over, Amber victorious over the forces of Chaos, the funeral train of Oberon appears. It is a gigantic procession of beasts from Shadow and Amber, musicians, troops, dragons, white cattle, torchbearers, and all manner of other beings, escorting the body of Oberon to some distant place.

After this, Corwin meets with Dara, who rejects him for his murder of Duke Borel, and his new-found son Merlin, who tells him of life in Chaos.

They are interrupted by the appearance of the Unicorn, returned from the Abyss with the Jewel of Judgement upon its neck. It kneels before Random, designating him the new king of Amber.

All the brothers and sisters kneel and pledge their swords to King Random. Corwin guides Random through a mental attunement with the Jewel of Judgement.

Later, after Random has broken the storm, and the others have returned to Amber or entered the Courts of Chaos, Corwin wakes and speaks with his son, relating the foregoing story.



MERLIN'S CHRONICLES

Trumps of Doom, *Blood of Amber*, *Sign of Chaos*, *Knight of Shadow* and *Prince of Chaos* are the second five books of the *Chronicles of Amber*. The narrator is Corwin's son Merlin. After the events of *Corwin's Chronicles*, Merlin spends the next eight years going to college, and then working, in California, on Shadow Earth.

TRUMPS OF DOOM

Merlin, son of Prince Corwin of Amber, finishes packing his belongings on April 30, and waits for someone to try to kill him. On each of the last seven April 30ths, an attempt has been made on his life. He is ready to move on from his job and his identity as Merle Corey, a computer engineer in California of Shadow Earth. His only unfinished business is the most perplexing: he wants to learn the identity of his assailant. Wary of the attempt, he goes down to a nearby coffee shop and meets a friend of his from college and work, a man named Lucas Raynard. They speak for a while, Luke trying to learn why Merlin is quitting and where he plans to go, but Merlin tells him little. They make plans for dinner that night.

Luke also passes along a note from Merlin's old girlfriend, Julia Barnes. The note warns that she knows Merlin's true identity and that there is danger. She wants to give him something important, so Merlin goes to her home.

He finds her corpse, killed by a savage, houndlike creature of Chaos. Merlin kills it and searches the apartment, finding a number of mysterious Trumps. He goes to a bookstore owned by another boyfriend of hers, learning from him that she had taken up a serious interest in the occult after Merlin left her. She was known to hang around with Victor Melman, a painter rumored to have magical abilities.

On the way to Melman's, Merlin remembers the incident that led to his breakup with Julia. They were at a beach, and Merlin, on a whim, shifted them through Shadow to a magical fairytale place in which they made love. He magicked her asleep and afterward denied the whole thing. This tore her, and their relationship, apart when he would not confide in her.

Melman's studio and apartment is in a warehouse, above a storage company. Melman has been expecting him and asks him to look at a special painting. The painting turns out to have an occult function, and Merlin is transported to a place where an altar waits for him, a dark figure ready to sacrifice him.

Merlin pushes the altar over and beats Melman in a sorcerous battle. Threatening the place by summoning Primal Chaos, Merlin demands to know Melman's mentor. Melman claims ignorance, pleading that his teacher always came cloaked, and that he was instructed to teach Julia, and that a place called the Keep of the Four Worlds was a

source of their power. When Melman attacks again with a dagger, Merlin hurls him into the Primal Chaos.

Returning to the studio, Merlin finds mentions of Amber in Melman's diary. The telephone rings, and Merlin answers, pretending to be Melman in need of medical aid. He waits, and a russet-haired woman with a gun Trumps into the apartment. Merlin disarms her, but she disables him with some sort of poisonous bite. He is only able to Trump out at the last minute, using one of the mysterious cards.

He awakes under the scrutiny of a Sphinx. It seems that he must play a riddle game in order to escape. The Sphinx is dissatisfied with Merlin's answers, and even more so with Merlin's new riddle. However, upon learning that Merlin is a Lord of Chaos, the Sphinx seems happy to call it a draw.

Back on Shadow Earth, Merlin finds that Melman's warehouse has been burnt to the ground. A boy shows him some strange ammunition found in the ruins. The bullets are filled with a pink powder which doesn't burn like gunpowder. Merlin buys a couple of the shells from the boy.

At Luke's hotel Merlin finds that his friend has left for New Mexico, and wants to meet with him in Santa Fe. The hotel clerk also gave Merlin a ring, set with a blue stone, to be returned to Luke.

In Santa Fe, Luke appears wearing military-style fatigues, obviously just in from the wilderness. Waiting for Luke to shower for dinner, Merlin is questioned by a man named Dan Martinez, who briefly speaks in Thari, the language of Amber and the Courts of Chaos, and flees just before Luke returns. Merlin, trying to return the ring, but finding it stuck on his finger, has to resort to the magical powers of Frakir, his mystic strangling cord, in order to get it off.

After dinner, Luke takes Merlin on a drive and questions him about Merlin's secret computer project, Ghostwheel. Merlin replies that Ghostwheel is just a theoretical model, something that could never work any place on Earth. Luke admits to knowing Victor Melman, and says that the painter exhibited magical abilities, and had mentioned Amber.

When Luke learns that Merlin is still carrying the Trumps from Julia's apartment, he says he had taken them from Melman to Julia, and asks for them so they can be

destroyed immediately.

A shot rings out. Luke returns fire with a pistol, and kills Dan Martinez. Luke then turns on Merlin, points his gun, calls him the son of Corwin, and orders him to leave. Merlin drives away. Searching Luke's room Merlin finds a round of ammunition from Luke's shirt pocket.

In New York Merlin visits Bill Roth, his father's old friend, who has become a legal advisor for Amber, having learned Thari and worked on the Patternfall Treaty with the Courts of Chaos. While visiting, Merlin has an odd encounter with a neighbor who is behaving strangely, and an anonymous telephone call from someone who speaks Thari, the tongue of Amber, and who invites Merlin to a meeting. Eventually, as things get a bit too strange, Merlin and Bill Roth escape to Amber, through a Trump contact with King Random.

Random had contacted Merlin to tell of him of Caine's murder, by a rifleman in a nearby Shadow. Bleys was also shot but only wounded, says Random, making this mysterious assailant a possible threat to all the Amberites. Merlin tells Random his own story, and shows him the bullets taken from the storehouse and Luke's pocket. It turns out that all three bullets work in Amber, revealing that they are made of the same gunpowder used by Corwin, the only substance which will ignite in Amber. Random decides to send Flora to Shadow Earth to investigate.

Merlin decides to meet with whoever placed the mysterious telephone call. While he is making a Trump sketch of their rendezvous, Fiona appears, offering to help. With Fiona spying on him through the Trump, Merlin goes through, and, while waiting, takes up with an attractive young woman. Breaking contact with Fiona, he goes off with the woman. In the stranger's bed he realizes that the woman is his mystery caller.

Merlin has to leave before he learns anything, though he does answer the woman's questions about his parents, Dara and Corwin. Having followed him to Shadow Earth, Fiona picks Merlin up in a car. When Merlin shows Fiona a photo of Luke, she gasps, but denies any knowledge of his identity. They Trump back to Amber.

At Caine's funeral the next day, the ceremony is interrupted by an assassination attempt by a masked and cloaked figure who throws a bomb at the royals. The figure escapes, and the ceremony continues.

Later that night, Merlin finally tells Random about the Ghostwheel project. He describes it as a kind of Trump-computer designed to search thousands of images throughout Shadow. After summoning it with a wheel-like Trump, Ghostwheel shows remarkable abilities, including a very human-sounding voice. Random realizes the danger of Ghostwheel being able to teleport lethal energies and Shadow storms to a person's side, and asks Merlin to shut it off. Merlin reluctantly agrees to check it out.

Jogging through Shadow to the place of Ghostwheel's mainframe, Merlin is continuously asked to "go back" by

voices and signs. He suffers attacks by sheets of flame, lightning and natural disasters. He is almost pulled under in an undulating land which opens in sudden rifts, but is rescued by Luke, dressed in Amberite fashion and wearing a ring of blue stone. Luke recognizes that the warning voice sounds just like Merlin, which means that Merlin's assailant is Ghostwheel.

Luke and Merlin continue traveling toward Ghostwheel, and Luke admits to being behind the April 30th assassination attempts, saying that he no longer means Merlin harm, but puts off any more complete explanations. When they reach the maze that contains Ghostwheel, they are set upon by a Shadow storm. Merlin uses one of the Trumps he found in Julia's room to escape, falling unconscious on the other side.

Merlin is awakened by Luke in a cave made of the same material found in Luke's blue ring. Luke seals Merlin up in the cave, telling Merlin that the blue crystal will block all magic and Trump sendings, and that he is going back to gain control of Ghostwheel and with it revenge himself upon Amber. Only then does Merlin realize that Luke is really Rinaldo, son of Brand.



BLOOD OF AMBER

Merlin remains trapped in the blue crystal cave for almost a month, his mind almost gone in frustration and helplessness. Two men, armed with daggers, enter the cave, and he finally escapes. Outside he is confronted by someone using something like Pattern, but with Logrus-like tendrils. It turns out to be Jasra, the lady with the poisonous bite.

She tries to escape, but he uses Frakir to catch her by the throat. When someone seems to be Trumping in to her aid, Merlin Trumps to Flora. Flora pulls him through and, recognizing the lady, punches Jasra square in the jaw. Luke and Jasra go one way, and Merlin ends up with Flora in San Francisco.

While recuperating, Merlin hears about Flora's investigations on Shadow Earth. Flora also explains that she remembers Jasra all too well as the seducer, and then murderer, of one of Flora's lovers in the Shadow of Kashfa. Eventually, Flora recalls, Jasra managed to sleep her way up to the throne of Kashfa.

The next morning, Merlin calls the woman he met in the bar in New York, who questioned him about his parents. She tells him that she cannot remember him at all. He gets a similar answer when he calls about the neighbor of Bill Roth's who questioned him about Corwin.

Then Merlin is contacted by Trump, but the caller is masked. The mysterious figure issues a warning before Merlin tries a grab. He ends up with nothing more than a button off the stranger's clothing, made of the same blue stone from Luke's cave, and a gigantic heap of flowers.

Together, Merlin and Flora drive to Julia's old apartment to investigate her death more fully. Merlin turns them both invisible, and they find a magically sealed portal. He convinces Flora to give him an hour before contacting Random, then opens the doorway and enters.

Inside, he meets a being called the Dweller on the Threshold, set to guard the way. Shapechanging into a demonic form, Merlin fights his way through, and passes beyond it to a place overlooking the Keep of the Four Worlds. While talking to a hermit named Dave, he watches as the four elementals of fire, water, air, and earth assail each other at the junction of a mighty fortress. Dave also tells Merlin that the Keep has been attacked constantly for about nine years, and was held by a wizard named Sharu Garrul. Dave admits to being a deserter from the Kashfan army under the command of Dalt and Prince Rinaldo (Merlin's old friend Luke).

After sharing a meal, Merlin leaves the hermit, and experiments with the forces which hold the four worlds apart by moving one of the boundary stones between the elements. This provokes another contact from the blue-masked sorcerer. Trumping to Random's side in Amber he is hit with another avalanche of flowers.

Merlin goes down to Amber town for a meal, selecting a tavern in Amber's roughest street. On his way back, he is

attacked by a group of assassins who bear one of the blue stones.

When he had killed all but one of his attackers, Merlin receives help from Vinta Bayle, the daughter of a local nobleman loyal to the crown and Caine's mistress. She recommends that they sail to her family estate near Amber, to hide from any further attempts on Merlin's life.

Once at Bayle's estate, Merlin discovers that Vinta Bayle is not what she seems. She seems to have been many people, including some of his mysterious pursuers, and even Luke's old girlfriend from their college days. She tells him that Luke was involved in training a large number of mercenaries in New Mexico for a military action, armed with the strange ammunition which works only in Amber. She reveals that the blue stones are used for tracking people through Shadow.

That night, Merlin receives a Trump contact from Luke, who has been wounded badly and is in need of escape. He Trumps in, and Merlin bandages him up. While Luke is unconscious Merlin searches him, and finds a deck of Trump. The cards include a set of the "Trump of Doom," the cards Merlin found at Julia's, plus Trump of Dalt, and of the missing twin children of Oberon, Delwin and Sand.

Merlin tries Dalt's Trump, but must resort to the Logrus in order to sever the contact. Luke wakes and tells Merlin that Dalt was responsible for his injuries. In the conversation that follows, Luke asks Merlin to help him rescue his mother, Jasra, from the Keep of the Four Worlds. Eventually Luke offers to give Merlin a piece of information vital to Amber, if Merlin will help free Jasra. Merlin takes Luke to the blue crystal cave, and leaves him there to recover.

Merlin trumps back to the Bayles' home, but finds that Vinta is unable to remember any of the events of the previous few days. Though changed in personality, she is friendly toward Merlin, loans him a horse, and sends him on his way back to Amber well provisioned.

During his journey, Merlin reflects on a few past events. He recalls lying to Fiona, telling her he was unable to walk Corwin's Pattern, when he just didn't want to. He flashes back to a fight where he blinded his youngest brother, Jurt, in one eye. And he remembers the final lesson from his Uncle Suhuy, in the Courts of Chaos, in which he learned to summon the raw destructive power of primal Chaos.

At his campfire that evening, Merlin is threatened, and then attacked by a one-eyed wolf. Although the creature is a shape-shifter of some sort, Merlin defeats it by burning its fur with the fire, and it leaves through a massive Trump Gate.

Entering Amber, Merlin runs into Bill Roth, now gone native Amberite, and discusses the Luke situation. Before leaving Amber, Merlin goes out to Corwin's tomb and throws the blue stones into his father's empty crypt.

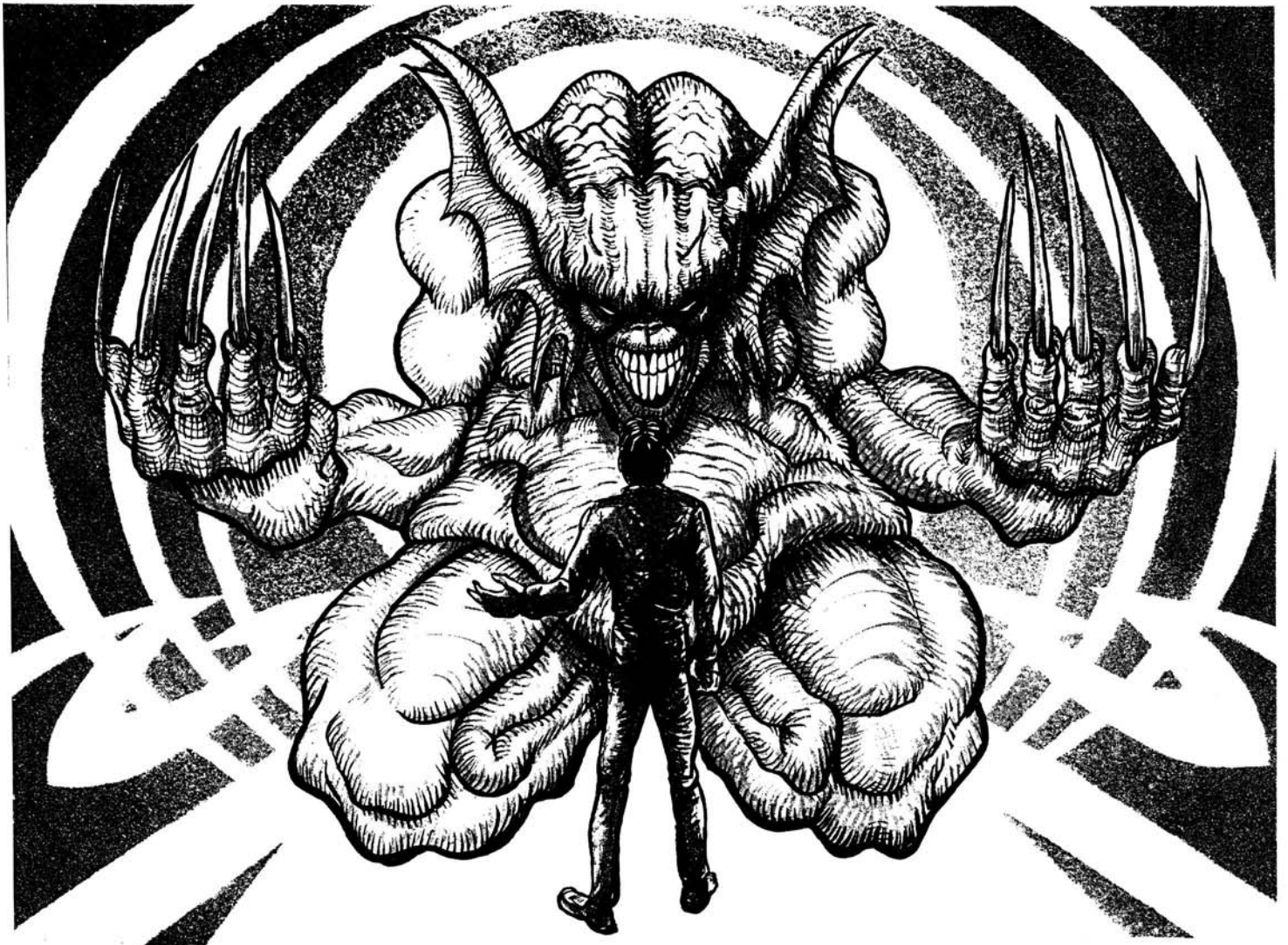
Then Merlin prepares himself by hanging an assortment of spells on the Logrus, and heads down to the Pattern. He walks to the center, clearing himself of the trace of the blue stones.

He then teleports into the Keep of the Four Worlds.

Jasra, and her former mentor Sharu Garrul, are frozen like statues and used for coatracks. In the central chamber of the Keep there is a magical Fount which focusses the magical energies created by the joining of the four elements.

Discovered, Merlin duels magically with the sorcerer in the blue mask, but manages to Trump himself and the frozen statue of Jasra back to Amber.

Luke then starts broadcasting crazy sendings and images in the castle. While Luke tells Merlin and Random that Dalt is a son of Oberon, and in control of the special ammunition, things get progressively more bizarre. Eventually Merlin is pulled away, and finds himself a part of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, drinking with Luke, the Mad Hatter, and all the Wonderland gang.



Sign of Chaos

Merlin, caught in the magical dream illusion, finds out from the Caterpillar that he is trapped in a drug-induced trap centering about Luke. When he uses a spell to kill a frumious Bandersnatch (a creature from Lewis Carroll's stories), the magical vision that the Logrus presents clears his head and reveals a way of escape.

At about this time a Fire Angel appears. This fearsome creature from Chaos seems to have been instructed to pursue Merlin. The Fire Angel first battles a Jabberwock and then, weakened by the encounter, is slain by Merlin with a Vorpall Sword.

Merlin learns that Luke had been drugged by the person in the blue mask. Merlin summons some drugs and vitamins, giving them to Luke to come down from his drug-induced state, and then leaves Luke to sleep it off.

Leaving Luke, Merlin contacts his step-brother Mandor, his elder from Chaos, who Trumps through to him. Over an elegant dinner instantly conjured by Mandor, they speak of their family and the royalty in Chaos. Mandor tells Merlin that Jurt may wish to kill Merlin to gain the family leadership and the kingship of Chaos, now that King Swayvill is dying. It seems that there are increasing numbers of bodies turning up in the struggle for the throne.

Fiona contacts Merlin by Trump, and then brings him and Mandor through to a place where a strange, cyclone-like, Shadow storm has manifested. Mandor summons Primal Chaos to examine how the Pattern treats it, and observes the results. Merlin Trumps back to Amber, leaving Fiona and Mandor to puzzle things out on their own.

Merlin finds that the only royals in the Castle are Queen Vialle and his Aunt Llewella. They tell him that the other princes are fortifying for a possible attack from Dalt, and that Benedict and Random are in Kashfa in the wake of some serious political upheaval. An official delegation from Begma, a country bordering Kashfa, is arriving, and Merlin is asked to help. Coral, the Begman Prime Minister's daughter, seems familiar to Merlin, and he volunteers to show her about the city.

Coral reveals that she knew Luke as a child, having grown up in the neighboring kingdom. When Merlin takes her into a series of caves beneath Amber, he guesses that she is the spirit creature that has been following him. He casts a spell he created to evict a possessing spirit, which doesn't affect Coral, but does reveal a trio of attackers who were following them. Jurt, having lost his zombie allies to Merlin's spell, and a finger to his own clumsiness, admits that the Fire Angel was his. As Merlin readies himself for a fight, Jurt disappears, leaving only roses behind.

Merlin takes Coral to the Pattern. Setting foot on the Pattern, Coral reveals herself to be a child of Oberon. With Merlin's help, she walks the Pattern. At its center, she

tries an experiment, over Merlin's objections, willing the Pattern to take her where it will. She disappears.

On the way back up to his chambers, Merlin meets Martin, Random's son, drastically changed into a cyberpunk musician after spending a year in an urban high-tech fast time Shadow.

Next, he's contacted by Mandor and Fiona, who are having some difficulties with Ghostwheel. Their talk is interrupted by a Trump contact from Luke, who is taking it easy at a swimming pool in Shadow, resting and healing. Merlin convinces Luke to call off his vendetta against Amber, and Luke convinces Merlin to help liberate Jasra from the Keep of the Four Worlds, making that the price for her freedom which might also end her vendetta against Amber. Luke tells Merlin that in the Keep is a magical fountain which can increase a person's strength, endurance and magical abilities, and possibly turn them into a living Trump. He suspects that this was what Brand did to become a magical super-being before his death.

After dinner, Merlin is informed by Vialle that Amber is in a state of war with Dalt, whose men are in Forest Arden. Dalt has demanded that Luke and Jasra be turned over. Merlin brings in Luke to meet Vialle, and Luke pledges loyalty to Vialle, officially ending the vendetta. She gives Luke her signet ring, putting him under her protection.

Luke and Merlin Trump to Julian's camp in Arden. After meeting under a flag of truce, Luke and Dalt agree to fight an unarmed duel to determine the course of the battle. If Luke wins, he will take Dalt prisoner, and vice versa. Either way, Dalt's forces will retreat. Dalt beats Luke, takes him and leaves.

Merlin returns to Vialle and explains the details of his day, including Coral's Pattern walk, and subsequent disappearance. At Vialle's request, Merlin then goes to explain things to Coral's sister, Nayda.

In Merlin's quarters Nayda exhibits magical abilities while examining Jasra. Merlin tries to reach Coral with his Trump, but is unable to reach her for more than a few seconds. Coral is in a place of utter blackness, unable to escape. He tries to contact Luke, but is blocked.

Merlin is suspicious. Nayda grew up with Luke near Kashfa but she says "Luke." Why wouldn't she call him "Rinaldo," the name he used in Kashfa?

Merlin summons Mandor in a hurry, and Mandor freezes Nayda, paralyzing her with a magical steel ball. They learn that Nayda has been possessed by a *ty'iga*, a bodiless demon from Chaos. This creature has been compelled to follow and protect Merlin, but it was confused while on Shadow Earth, unable to tell Merlin from Luke.

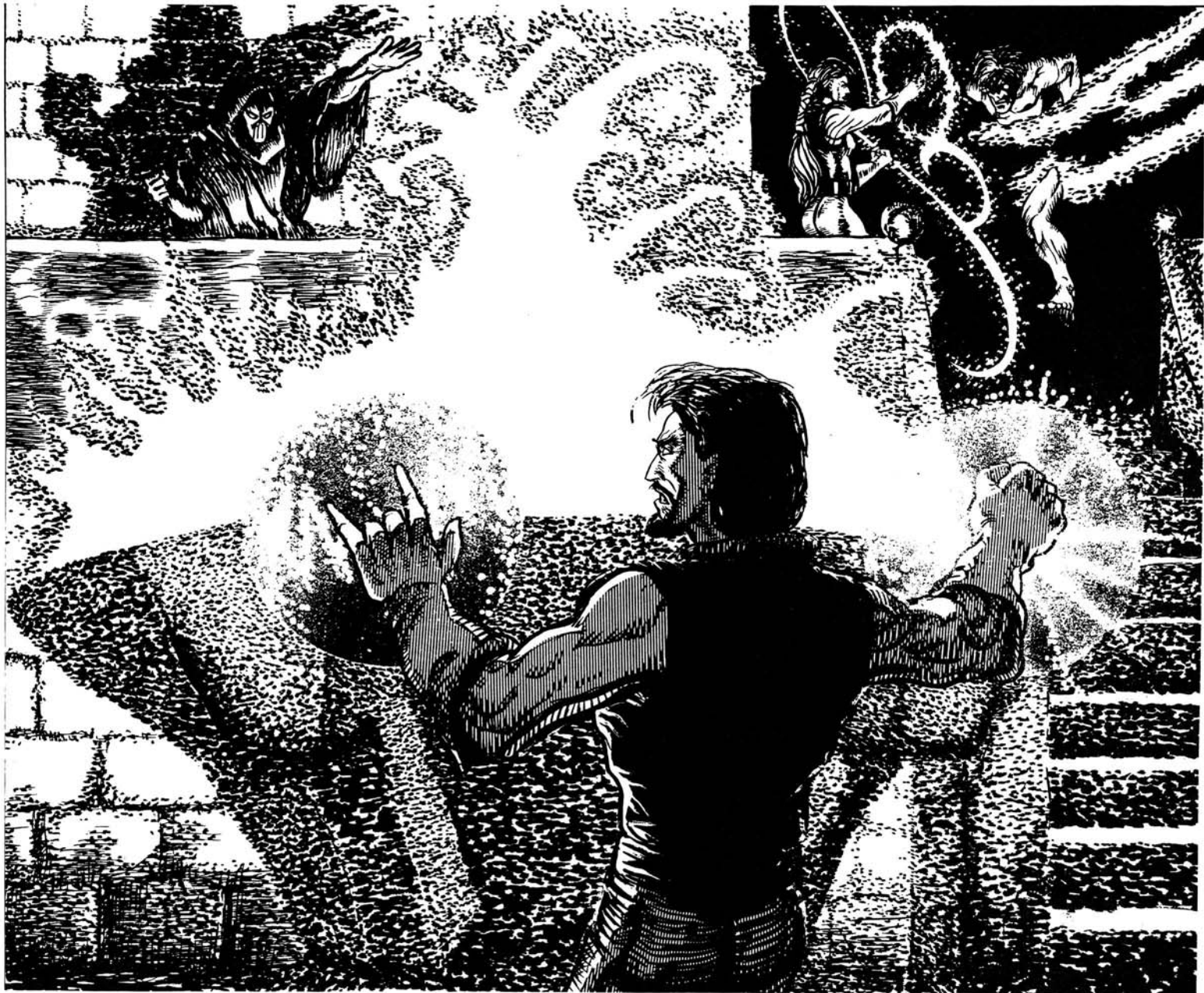
Another complication comes up when Mandor threatens to expel the *ty'iga*. Nayda is already dead, animated only by the demon. If it leaves, the body will

die, leaving Amber in a considerable diplomatic quandary.

Merlin frees Jasra from her spell of paralysis. After introductions and explanations, Jasra agrees to join Merlin and Mandor in an assault on the Keep of the Four Worlds.

Once there a magical battle opens up. Jasra takes on Jurt while Merlin goes up against Mask, with Mandor as reserve and support. During the battle, the frozen Sharu Garrul, former master of the Keep, gets free and attacks Jasra.

Merlin gets close enough to drive a dagger into Mask's side. Just as Mask falls to the ground, Jurt teleports in. Jurt and Mask teleport away, but not before Merlin sees that the secret identity of his nemesis is his old girlfriend Julia.



KNIGHT OF SHADOWS

Merlin, freed by Mandor from the collapsing, burning Keep of the Four Worlds, sees Jasra bathing Sharu Garrul in the Fount of Power. The process will turn the sorcerer into Jasra's servant, and into a guardian being which is neither human nor magical.

Once Jasra resumes control of the Keep of the Four Worlds, the three victors decide to discuss the situation over a meal. In spite of the damage from their battle they manage to find an intact wine cellar, comfortable guest quarters, and a dining room with a mountain view. Mandor conjures a dinner to complement the wine, and Jasra tells of how she had trained Julia to be Merlin's executioner, but that Julia had revealed unexpected talent.

Merlin then attempts to Trump Coral, with Jasra, Mandor and the Ghostwheel as backup. They find her asleep in a circle of fire in a place of utter blackness. Some power is invoked by their interest, and Merlin uses the Logrus to sever the Trump contact. Warned that they are being sought, Ghostwheel teleports them away, sending duplicates scuttling though Shadow as false trails.

Merlin ends up alone in a cave. Warned by Ghostwheel not to use Logrus or otherwise call attention to himself, Merlin sets the cave mouth with wards of protection, and goes to sleep.

He wakes to see the figure of Dworkin outside the cave mouth. When Dworkin reaches through the magic wards, the flesh is stripped away from his arm, revealing Dworkin as a magical construct of some sort. Merlin directs the Logrus against it and destroys it. Immediately after, Merlin is visited by Oberon, trying the same entry. He demands that Merlin choose between Amber and Chaos, and Merlin refuses. Oberon tries to enter, and Merlin throws the Logrus against him and, in the explosion that follows, Oberon is shown to be another construct.

The third visitor takes the form of Corwin, Merlin's father. Convinced that this is another fake, though a rather convincing one, Merlin draws his sword and engages in combat. Just as Corwin knocks him unconscious, Merlin realizes that this is not a construct, but real.

Merlin wakes in a place of no color, all grey, black, and white. There is no sound there, and he cannot use the Trumps or shift Shadow. Merlin summons the Logrus in this place, and it knocks him out in a powerful rush. He wakes again to find that his strangling cord, Frakir, has been gifted with full sentience and now has the ability to speak. She, Frakir, says that the Logrus did this so that Merlin could receive messages from the Logrus and the Pattern.

Following Frakir's instructions Merlin walks to a sort of chapel, where there are two piles of armor. One set is white, suitable for his human form, and the other is black, and shaped for his Chaos form. Frakir tells him he must choose between them and guard his choice for the night.

Merlin refuses to choose and piles the armor together.

He goes to sleep, a course of action clearly against the rules of the trial. After a bizarre dream where he encounters his father, he wakes and finds a dead dwarf next to him, strangled by Frakir. He turns to take the food waiting for him behind the altar. Hungry, Merlin tries to eat before he is permitted to do so by the trial, and is surprised when the Unicorn itself appears, quickly followed by the one-eyed Serpent of Chaos.

They tell him to follow the rules of the trial, and he tells them that he does not wish to choose between his heritages. They tell him that his attitude is displeasing, and he is knocked out by a thunderclap. Waking later, he eats and Frakir tells him that the Corwin which brought him to this place was human. According to Frakir, the Dworkin and Oberon were constructs of the Pattern, duplicated from the Pattern's memories of when the characters walked it last.

There are three doors in the chapel through which Merlin may pass. He tries to enter a well-lit one, and finds himself barred. The middle one is dimly lit and not barred, and the last is pitch black and also open to travel. He enters the middle one, and hears the dwarf laughing behind him. The door disappears before he can exit the tunnel he is now in. Merlin finds the reason that the dwarf laughed: it had planted a dagger of Chaos on him while he was unconscious, barring him from entering the path of the Pattern.

Brand appears, the right half of his body totally black, and the left half white. This version of Brand is interested in hearing about his son Luke, though he talks in circles. He describes himself as a Pattern-Ghost, and asks for a bit of Merlin's blood. After Merlin slashes himself, contact with his fiery Chaos blood causes the Brand to go up in flames and then vanish.

The landscape changes to a city street, and Merlin finds Deirdre waiting for him. She recognizes that Merlin is not a Pattern-Ghost, and she also drinks some of his blood, which appears in a liquid form this time. She also disappears.

Merlin, eager to finish this trial, begins running and is matched by a mirror image of himself. He realizes that this is no double, and begins to race in earnest. He realizes that it is his half-brother Jurt. They stop and Merlin finds out that this is another ghost, from the Logrus instead of the Pattern. When the Jurt-Ghost starts to speak peaceably with Merlin, the Logrus tries to destroy it. A taste of Merlin's blood strengthens it, re-forming it into Jurt again.

After a hike through an icy plain, Merlin and Jurt see the same series of images as before, and Merlin takes from one a silver rose, the symbol of his father. He pins it to his cloak as another Logrus-ghost appears. It is Lord Borel, a master of arms of Chaos, who was slain by Corwin in the Patternfall War. Merlin tries to avoid fighting it, but is

forced to draw his sword. Somehow, it is Grayswandir, his father's Pattern sword, in his sheath. Contact with the blade destroys the construct.

Still in the company of the Jurt-Ghost, Merlin ends up in Random and Vialle's bedroom in Amber. It is the real Amber, and Merlin is instructed to take the Jewel of Judgement from its hiding place. Merlin does so, and they return to the place between Shadows.

Another version of Borel appears, demanding the Jewel of Judgement. Before they can fight, a guardian appears. It is Benedict's Pattern-Ghost, who promises to keep Borel busy for a long time.

Travelling for a great distance, they find themselves in a room like the one of the Pattern in Amber, though this Pattern is broken and in its center is the unconscious Coral. Once again something tries to destroy the ghost of Jurt, but Merlin stands up for it, refusing to do anything further if his brother disappears.

After pointing out that Jurt is also a son of Dara, the two of them start to walk the Broken Pattern.

The next obstacle comes with a familiar face. It is the Logrus-Ghost of Merlin himself. Rather than walking the lines of the Pattern, it walks the imperfections. Jurt leaps forward, sacrificing himself, and destroys the double of Merlin.

Completing his walk, Merlin seems to have repaired the Pattern, perhaps because he bore the Jewel of Judgement along its lines. Looking into the Jewel of Judgement, Merlin sees himself making love to Coral. They make love. Eventually the two of them return to Castle Amber, where Merlin tells Coral of her sister Nayda's death and possession by the *ty'iga*.

After Coral's departure, Dworkin stops by for coffee and to hear Merlin's story. On Dworkin's advice, Merlin attunes himself to the Jewel of Judgement. After this he makes a couple of attempts to return the Jewel, none successful.

Returning to his room, he finds Coral. Since she has somehow upset the spells on the sleeping *ty'iga*, Merlin calls for help. Mandor, brought in by Ghostwheel, focuses his attention on the Jewel of Judgement. Mandor calls it the *Bloody Eye of Chaos* and says that it was thought lost for millennia. The *ty'iga* wakes up and seizes the Jewel, fleeing out into the hall.

The Sign of the Logrus manifests itself, offering an escape route for the being carrying the Jewel. Just as she is about to escape, Mandor's magic steel balls catch up with the *ty'iga* and freeze her in place. Then the Sign of the Pattern appears, confronting the Logrus. Ghostwheel enters the picture, encircling the form of Nayda (the *ty'iga*), and prompting a stand-off between the Logrus and the Pattern. In the middle of an argument between the Powers, Ghostwheel snatches away the Jewel of Judgement and the *ty'iga*. Logrus and Pattern rush toward each other, causing an explosion that destroys a great deal of the Castle Amber.

Merlin was saved from harm by Dworkin, but Mandor

has a broken arm, Coral is missing an eye, and Random is stunned and angry. They all go into Random's quarters, and Dworkin asks Ghostwheel to return the Jewel of Judgement, which it does along with Nayda. While Dworkin busies himself in healing the injured Coral, the *ty'iga*, now freed of its compulsion to follow Merlin, complains that it has no purpose in life anymore and cannot flee the body of Nayda.

Random tells Merlin that there was a *coup* in Kashfa, and that the candidate that Amber had groomed for the kingship is missing. The takeover was made by Dalt's mercenaries. In place of the original ruler-to-be, Prince Rinaldo (Luke) is to be crowned king. Since this has fouled up Amber's political strategy for the region, Merlin agrees to attend the coronation as Random's observer.

Heading back to his room, Merlin runs into the Corridor of Mirrors, a haunted element of Castle Amber which appears sporadically in different places, and is known to give visions or make people disappear. He enters the corridor and it shows him visions of himself, of Oberon, and of many strange landscapes and scenes. Looking into one of the mirrors, he is transported into a strange barren place, climbing a small hill to find an altar. There he is attacked by images of Julia and Coral, but is rescued by an image of Dara. All three try to use knives and forks on him, but he is pulled free by Corwin, who pushes him out of the mirror-maze.

He wakes in Amber again, a piece of brick from the altar in his hand, and wounds matching those given by the images from the mirrors. Back in the safety of his chambers, he dresses for the ceremony. Searching for an appropriate hat, and taking advantage of the damage to the Castle, Merlin checks out Brand's quarters. He finds an appropriate hat, and also Brand's sword, a Pattern blade similar to Corwin's Grayswandir. Searching with Logrus sight Merlin then finds a magical ring of immense power. It is an artifact which draws on numerous powerful sources from Shadow.

Frakir objects to the ring, and tries to get it off Merlin's finger. Merlin takes Frakir off, tying her to a bedpost as punishment. Random calls, and Merlin goes back to the Royal Chambers to investigate. Random tells him that Coral and Dworkin teleported away in some fashion with the Jewel from the Jewel of Judgement, leaving the setting behind.

Wearing Brand's ring, Merlin seems somehow changed. Blind Vialle, reliant on her feelings, fails to recognize Merlin, and even Random notices something.

Merlin uses the ring to track Coral, and the missing Jewel of Judgement, to Kashfa. Once there he meets with Luke in an almost deserted cathedral across from the palace. Luke identifies Brand's sword as Werewindle, brother to Grayswandir.

Jurt surprises them both by teleporting in, knocking Luke down and taking Brand's sword. Before he can flee with the blade, Merlin hits him with a barrage of spells from the ring. In response, Jurt grabs a woman who was in

the cathedral, holding her hostage. Luke rises, telling Jurt that if he kills his wife, that he will hunt him to the ends of the earth. Jurt falls to the ground, a strange radiation washing across him from the woman's eye. He teleports away in fear.

It is Coral who stands there, and in place of her missing eye is the Jewel of Judgement.



PRINCE OF CHAOS

After attending the coronation of Luke as Rinaldo, King of Kashfa, Merlin meets with Coral. She explains that her marriage to Luke is part of a diplomatic arrangement. Investigating the Jewel implanted in her eye socket, Merlin finds that it is linked to Coral, to the Pattern, and to forces unknown, on many different levels.

Merlin is awakened by Gryll, a shapechanging demon servant of his Chaos family. Gryll tells him that Swayvill, Lord of Chaos, is dead, and Merlin's presence at the funeral is expected.

Gryll absorbs a chair so he'll be big enough, and Merlin climbs on. Gryll flies toward the Courts of Chaos along a ribbon of blackness, similar to the Black Road. Along the way the demon describes a powerful spell laid upon Merlin, one too powerful for Gryll to remove.

The demon's ride takes Merlin to his Uncle Suhuy, in the Courts of Chaos. It seems that Merlin is under black watch, that is, under official guard, because he has risen so far in the line of succession for the throne of Chaos. He is shown four claimants; Tmer, Tubble, Merlin, and Jurt. Suhuy also identifies Brand's ring as a *spikard*. Their conversation is interrupted, first by Mandor and then Dara, and each make arrangements for later meetings with Merlin. Before all the talk ends, and he goes off to bed, Merlin notices that Ghostwheel is about his wrist, disguised as Frakir.

Dreaming, he enters the Corridor of Mirrors again, meeting Coral, Luke, Victor Melman, Random, Julia, Jasra, Nayda, Jurt, Fiona, Corwin, Bill Roth, Dworkin, and finally the Cheshire Cat. All of them offer him advice or words of warning, all in a rather cryptic way.

When Merlin wakes, he learns that the dream was Suhuy's sending, a spell to help him sort out his problems and open his mind to enlightenment. Suhuy also claims to have lifted the spell that was hanging onto Merlin.

Speaking with Ghostwheel, Merlin learns that his construct has now become an initiate of the Jewel of Judgement. Merlin gives Ghostwheel some directions, and it goes off to examine the Logrus.

Turning to his Trump, Merlin tries a contact with Coral but finds that she is in the midst of a dream. He tries to reach Corwin with his Trump, and gets a faint response, a voice calling his name from blackness, but the connection is broken by a black bird, which warns Merlin away and then escapes.

Trying his father's trick of pretending to know more than he does, Merlin leads Mandor into talking about the succession issue. Mandor tells him that he believes that the Logrus let Swayvill die, as part of an overall scheme to get Merlin on the throne. The Pattern and Logrus have been at war for a long time, explains Mandor, and the new Pattern created by Corwin has unbalanced their struggle. The Pattern, working through ghosts, may have been responsible for events leading up to the Patternfall War,

such as Brand's being imprisoned by Fiona and sniping at Corwin at the same time. Brand may have been driven mad by the Logrus and the Fount at the Keep of the Four Worlds. Mandor, like the Logrus itself, feels that having Merlin on the throne would benefit Chaos in the struggle, perhaps balancing things out more. Merlin reveals that he has no intention of sitting upon the throne, frustrating Mandor. Changing the subject, Merlin asks about House Hendrake and their feelings towards Corwin. Mandor tells him about finding a shrine to Benedict of Amber within the Ways of Hendrake, their ancestral home.

Merlin goes off to visit an old cemetery where he finds a note from an old childhood friend, a girl named Rhanda.

Luke appears, acting strangely, bearing a message, but reluctant to deliver it. Realizing that this version of Luke is actually a Pattern-Ghost, Merlin fills and offers a cup of his own blood. As they talk Merlin learns that Jasra, Luke's mother, was from a Shadow adjacent to the Courts of Chaos, and that she was a maidservant to Dara. It seems that Jasra learned her magic from Dara, and that it was while in this service that she met Brand. It may even be that Luke is part of the same Logrus-backed breeding program that brought Merlin's parents together.

Once Luke is stabilized, the two of them attempt to leave, but are blocked by a Logrus-Ghost of Borel, Master of Arms of Chaos, and the Logrus itself. To counter Borel, Corwin appears. Once again Corwin bests Borel with a foul blow.

Merlin, Luke's Pattern-Ghost, and Corwin flee to Corwin's Pattern. Along the way this Corwin admits that he is the sole Pattern-Ghost of the new Pattern, and that he does not know where the true Corwin is. A deal is struck between the Pattern-Ghost of Luke and the new Pattern, trading the Pattern's support for guard duty. The three of them walk the Pattern together, and Merlin then returns to the Courts, and his old home, the Ways of Sawall.

Having a bit of time before his meeting with Dara, Merlin enters the great art gallery that his family is famous for, a maze which houses a magnificent collection from all over Shadow and Chaos. He meets another of his childhood servants, Glait, a snakelike demon sleeping in a vase. Following Glait's instructions Merlin finds a hidden way, one that contains a shrine to his father Corwin, and Corwin's sword, Grayswandir.

As he meets Dara for lunch, she tells Merlin that he should follow the path of the Logrus, for it will lead him to greatness. She tells him that he is the only qualified candidate for the position of mediator between Chaos and Amber. When he asks her about Corwin, they are interrupted by the appearance of the Logrus, hot in pursuit of Merlin's Ghostwheel. They move to defend Ghostwheel, and the Logrus departs after asking Merlin again to take the throne of Chaos if that is what is needed.

Merlin's next encounter is with Jurt, who asks for a talk. They meet in a giant piece of artwork, a maze of mirrors. Amidst their many images the two feel safe from immediate attack and discuss the current situation. Jurt tells Merlin that he has decided against competing for the throne, and that Julia, who he now loves, is part of the reason. Jurt is willing to call off his vendetta against Merlin. Jurt also tells Merlin that he overheard Dara sending a force to abduct Coral. They decide to join forces and to rescue Coral.

In red-garbed chaos forms, they attend the funeral of the Lord of Chaos together. In order to cover their absence, Merlin magically disguises two guards to appear as Jurt and Merlin. Then Jurt teleports them to Luke in Kashfa. Over breakfast they fill Luke in on recent developments, and then the three of them go to Corwin's Pattern to meet Luke's Pattern-Ghost. To avoid confusion, Merlin resolves to call the duplicate Luke by his Kashfan name, Rinaldo.

Teleporting back to the funeral in the Courts of Chaos, Merlin and Jurt come on a scene of mass confusion. An unknown assassin has dispatched another of the claimants who stood between Merlin and the throne. When the two guards rushed forward, their disguises were spotted and they were seized. For security, Merlin is ordered to leave for a time, and he and Jurt use the opportunity to leave the funeral once again, returning directly to Corwin's Pattern.

Jurt, taking Rinaldo's place as guardian of the new Pattern, remains behind while Merlin, Luke and Rinaldo return to Kashfa, where they meet with Nayda. Merlin leaves them to discuss things, heading back to Jurt's apartment in Chaos to change his clothing and form for a return to the end of the funeral. Snooping around, Merlin finds Jurt's shrine to Brand, complete with Brand's sword Werewindle.

Merlin returns to the funeral in time to witness yet another assassination. When the casket is due to be sent over the edge of the Rim of the Abyss, there is a momentary blackout and Merlin's rival to the throne goes over the edge into the endless Abyss. Merlin, seeing that he is now sole candidate for the throne, and not wanting to be delayed, takes an old girlfriend, Gilva of Hendrake, and uses the spikard to teleport away.

Merlin asks Gilva if her family might have been involved in Corwin's disappearance. Gilva takes offense, saying that the death of Borel, and others of her house, would be viewed as part of the fortunes of war, to be put behind them once the war was over. Merlin shows her the shrine to Corwin and she explains that many of the Chaosians began to worship the Amberites with private shrines after being defeated by them in the Patternfall War, though the practice had been outlawed eventually.

After sending Gilva back to the funeral, Merlin Trumps to Luke's side. Having left Rinaldo in charge of Kashfa, Luke, Nayda and Dalt are following the trail of Coral's abductors. Merlin summons a striped horse, which he

names Tiger, to travel with them, and they proceed. Taking Merlin aside, Nayda asks that her identity as a *ty'iga* be kept secret from Luke.

Catching up with Coral, they find that her Chaos abductors are holding her in a tower, which they are defending against the Pattern-Ghosts of Caine, Benedict, Gérard, and Eric of Amber. As Gérard and a giant Chaosian wrestle, Merlin turns invisible and sneaks into the tower to find Coral. Merlin carries Coral out, magically disposing of the those Chaos guards not killed by the Pattern-Ghosts.

When Merlin denies Coral to the Pattern-Ghosts, Dalt steps forward to defend her. After a quick sword fight with Eric, Dalt is beaten. Merlin tries to use the spikard, his magic ring, against them, but its energies are stopped before he can use them. Saluting, the Pattern-Ghosts of Eric, Caine, Benedict and Gérard disappear.

The Sign of the Pattern comes then, demanding Coral. Merlin, refusing, tries to use the spikard against it, and is knocked unconscious.

Merlin wakes at the Primal Pattern to find Nayda standing between him and the Sign of the Pattern. While Nayda speaks, Merlin positions himself next to the Pattern itself. He cuts himself with a dagger and, holding his blood cupped in his hand over the Pattern, forces a settlement. Merlin, Coral, Dalt, and Nayda leave, and Luke stays behind, using his own blood to force the Pattern into keeping its end of the bargain.

After meeting up with Jurt, at Corwin's Pattern, Merlin falls asleep. He dreams himself back to the Corridor of Mirrors again, where he sees Mandor, Dara, one of the demon-servants, and a childhood girlfriend. In another mirror Merlin sees Delwin, one of Oberon's lost children, who tells him that the spikard he wears is not the one he was intended to find. Mandor had placed King Swayvill's spikard in Amber, set with spells to make Merlin into a puppet, but it was switched. From another mirror he takes the original spikard from Bleys.

When he wakes, Merlin is asked to stop an earthquake which threatens Corwin's Pattern. Using the spikard, Merlin traces the source of the problem to the Logrus, which is manipulating fault lines deep underground, and cuts off the access.

With Corwin's ghost, Merlin returns to Corwin's shrine. So that Corwin won't be missed, Corwin's Pattern-Ghost switches places with the real thing, so Dara will think that Corwin is still imprisoned. They go to Jurt's apartment. While fetching some food in a kitchen, Merlin meets Julia, and they speak for a short time, apologizing to each other.

The next day Merlin rescues Ghostwheel, who had been dimensionally trapped by a playful demon. Prepared with both Ghostwheel and the spikard, Merlin summons both Mandor and Dara, forcing them both into their human forms.

Determined to bind Merlin's will to their own, Dara and Mandor attack magically. Merlin parries with the forces of the spikard, and a battle of both magic and shape

shifting follows. He defeats them both, but not before Dara manages to summon the Sign of the Logrus.

Ghostwheel intervenes on Merlin's behalf, blocking the Logrus. The Logrus relents, wishing to conserve its strength. It is agreed that Merlin will take the throne, without strings.

At the final battlefield of the Patternfall War, now healed and peaceful, the place where Corwin had told the story of the first Chronicles to Merlin, Merlin and Corwin say their goodbyes. Merlin sends Corwin back to Amber, and then starts the long walk both to the Courts of Chaos, and his waiting throne.

The End.



FREQUENT QUESTIONS ABOUT AMBER DICELESS ROLE-PLAYING

• Can a player character ever get beyond First Rank? How?

If there's one hole in the system that's been pointed out most often, it's what to do with characters when they advance past first Rank.

One solution is taking the idea of the "ladder" of Attribute Rankings and extending it up through the elder Amberites (or other NPCs). Then the players must match the "rungs" of the older generation.

Another way is by letting the "number one" forge their own way upward, creating "rungs" for the others to follow. This assumes that, regardless of where the "top" turns up, sooner or later a player or NPC is going to overreach the maximum. By the way, if the original first place bidder stalls a couple of times, while someone at "1.5" keeps pushing, then I let that other player create the next "rung."

• I want my character to have a New Power, but everything costs too much. What's wrong with the system?

Sorry, New Powers are for Game Masters, not for player characters!

Do you think that Dworkin, in creating the Primal Pattern, spent a measly 50 (or even 150) points?

Not likely! Game Masters can, if they want, bring the points down to player scale by several methods. For example, if you look at Fattern as shared among all the Amberites, the cost per character is pretty reasonable (Cost=Power÷Number of Initiates).

• What's the difference between Shadow Shape Conjunction, Empowerment, and Complex Conjunction?

Your confusion between the different types of Conjunction may be due to your looking at them in terms of the results rather than the Magic involved. For example, a Conjuror could get a "Hellhound" in any of the following four ways:

1. Create a Hellhound-looking thing, out of Shadow itself (Basic Conjunction). This is also the most easily dispelled, such that a movement across Shadow, or a Power Word, could instantly dissolve the creation.

2. Take a creature, like a normal dog, and Conjure it into the form of a Hellhound (Conjure Shadow Shape). If dispelled, or moved away through Shadow, the form of the Hellhound will fade, leaving the normal dog behind.

3. Take the same dog, but give it the powers of a Hellhound (Empowerment). Although the empowerment can be dispelled easily with Magic, the powers will not be easily scattered by Shadow travel.

4. Shaping Shadow into a full duplicate of a Hellhound (Complex Conjunction). By main force of will, the Conjuror has created something that is the equal of a "real" Hellhound. Dispelling such an item is more difficult since it involves crossing the Conjuror's Psyche. Shadow travel will tend to dissolve the creation, but it's possible for the Conjuror to "escort" the item, and preserve it.

- **Do you need Shape Shifting, or Advanced Shape Shifting, to grow claws or armor?**

Oops! I hadn't noticed that the section in Advanced Shape Shifting falls short of describing what it should.

Yes, anyone with Shape Shifting should be able to grow claws, fur, armor, and even wings or gills. However, just because a character grows the physical feature doesn't mean they'll have the skill to use it.

Take flight as an example. It's one thing to grow wings, another thing altogether if you want to use them to fly. Someone with Basic Shape Shifting can turn into an imitation of a bird (Shape Shift Animal Forms) and fly. The same character can just grow wings on top of their human form, but that won't give them any of a bird's flying skill or talent (though, with practice, it's possible to learn).

On the other hand, the Advanced Shape Shifter can grow wings on their human body, and be able to Shape Shift selectively so as to gain the bird's flying abilities.

- **What do I do when I've got a player character and an Non-Player Character with the same Warfare?**

Hey!

Where did this NPC come from?

The "opponent" came from you, the Game Master. You invented the "opponent," knowing full well that this encounter might come about. So why are you tormenting yourself creating such an ambiguous situation?

- **Should my players be using Psyche against all the Shadow people they meet? Isn't that too easy for them?**

First off, as Amberites and generally god-like beings, I have no problem whatever with the player characters lording it over mere Shadow dwellers. After all, what difference does it make if they Psychically dominate hundreds, or even millions?

As a Game Master you need to look at what some of the drawbacks might be to their habit. Just figure out some interesting consequences. As in the following example:

GM: "Yup, you're walking up to the Guardhouse, and you hear voices from within."

Player: "Voices? After my Psychic command those two guards shouldn't wake up for hours!"

GM: "That's true... So what are you doing?"

Player: "I'll sneak up and take a look inside."

GM: "Wow! You see Caine! He's looking right into the eyes of one of the guards. The other guard still seems unconscious, and there's a big guy with his back towards you. What are you doing?"

Player: "Caine? What is he doing?"

GM: "This is really weird, Caine is staring at the guard and the guard seems to be speaking strangely... in fact, the guard seems to be imitating your voice, your way of speaking. The guard says something about Wyverns... Say, aren't Wyverns the Guardians on your personal Shadow?"

Player: "What? What else is he saying?"

GM: "Well, I'm not sure you want to keep listening. The big guy is turning toward you, and... hmmm... it seems to be Gérard! What are you doing?"

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Shadow Knight Demon Worksheet

ATTRIBUTES

Psyche

- ☐ -5 Points - Human Psyche
- ☐ 0 Points - Chaos Psyche
- ☐ Demon Rank: ____ [____ Points]

Strength

- ☐ -5 Points - Human Strength
- ☐ 0 Points - Chaos Strength
- ☐ Demon Rank: ____ [____ Points]

Endurance

- ☐ -5 Points - Human Endurance
- ☐ 0 Points - Chaos Endurance
- ☐ Demon Rank: ____ [____ Points]

Warfare

- ☐ -5 Points - Human Warfare
- ☐ 0 Points - Chaos Warfare
- ☐ Demon Rank: ____ [____ Points]

QUALITIES

Natural Armor

- ☐ -2 Points - None
- ☐ -1 Point - Natural Bone
- ☐ 0 Points - Weapon Resistant
- ☐ 1 Point - Impenetrable
- ☐ 2 Points - Energy Resistant
- ☐ 4 Points - Impervious

Natural Armament

- ☐ -2 Points - Organic
- ☐ -1 Point - Metallic
- ☐ 0 Points - Extra Hard
- ☐ 1 Point - Doubling Damage
- ☐ 2 Points - Deadly Damage
- ☐ 4 Points - Destructive Damage

Resistance to Order

- ☐ 0 Points - None
- ☐ 1 Point - Sensitive
- ☐ 2 Points - Temporary
- ☐ 4 Points - Permanent

Total Point Cost

Game Master

Demon Name & Description

POWERS

Demonic Shadow Manipulation

- ☐ 0 Points - None
- ☐ 1 Point - Sense Shadow
- ☐ 2 Points - Select Shadow
- ☐ 4 Points - Shadowmastery
- ☐ 8 Points - Shift Shadow
- ☐ 16 Points - Evoke Chaos

Demonic Shape Shifting

- ☐ 0 Points - Named & Numbered Forms
- ☐ 1 Point - Limited Shape Shift
- ☐ 2 Points - Blood Shape Shift
- ☐ 4 Points - Demonic Shape Shift
- ☐ 8 Points - Bodiless Shape Shift
- ☐ 16 Points - Dimensional Shift

Demonic Magic Manipulation

- ☐ 0 Points - None
- ☐ 1 Point - Magic Intuition
- ☐ 2 Points - Magic Manipulation
- ☐ 4 Points - Magic Well
- ☐ 8 Points - Magic Drain
- ☐ 16 Points - Magic Domination

SERVITUDE MULTIPLIER

- ☐ None (*1)
- ☐ Single Mission or Goal (*2)
- ☐ Pact (*3)
- ☐ Servitude (*4)
- ☐ Devotion (*5)
- ☐ Lifetime (*6)

QUANTITY MULTIPLIER

- ☐ Unique (*1)
- ☐ Named & Numbered (*2)
- ☐ Family (*3)
- ☐ Race (*4)

NOTE:

For Game Master use only!

Shadow Knight Shadow Worksheet

Controlling Character's Name

Shadow Name

SHADOW DESCRIPTION

TIME FLOW (Relative to Amber):

One Shadow Hour = ____ Amber (☐Seconds/☐Minutes/☐Hours/☐Days/☐Years)

TYPICAL DENIZENS:

FUNCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY OF SHADOW:

- ☐ Animal (none) ☐ Primitive ☐ Medieval ☐ Magic—doesn't work with Tech
☐ Engine Power ☐ Gunpowder ☐ Electricity ☐ Magic & Technology Together

POWER AVAILABILITY/STRENGTH IN SHADOW:

- Pattern: ☐ Resistant to Pattern Users ☐ Malleable to Pattern Users
Logrus: ☐ Resistant to Logrus Users ☐ Malleable to Logrus Users
Trump: ☐ Totally Blocked ☐ Trump Use Difficult ☐ Trump Use Unrestricted
Magic: ☐ Totally Blocked ☐ Magic is Rare/Difficult ☐ Magic is Easy

SHADOW TYPE

PERSONAL ☐ 1 Point

REALM (Amber ☐/Chaos ☐) 2 Points

PRIMAL ☐ 4 Points

DEGREE OF CONTROL OVER SHADOW

CONTENTS ☐ 1 Point

TIME FLOW ☐ 2 Points

DESTINY ☐ 4 Points

SHADOW BARRIERS

COMMUNICATION ☐ 1 Point

- ☐ Pattern (☐In/☐Out/☐Both) ☐ Logrus (☐In/☐Out/☐Both) ☐ Trump (☐In/☐Out/☐Both)
☐ Magic (☐In/☐Out/☐Both) ☐ Psyche (☐In/☐Out/☐Both) ☐ Other (☐In/☐Out/☐Both)

ACCESS ☐ 2 Points / Describe Access Point(s):

GUARDS ☐ 4 Points / Describe Guards:

Total Shadow Point Cost

Shadow Knight Construct Worksheet

Controlling Character's Name

Construct Name

CONSTRUCT POWER SOURCE(S):

- ☐ Pattern
- ☐ Broken Pattern
- ☐ Logrus
- ☐ Trump
- ☐ Shape Shifting
- ☐ Magic/Conjuration

- ☐ Innate Shadow Power
- ☐ Innate Shadow Technology
- ☐ Innate Shadow Magic

- ☐ Shadow Convergence (Multiple Shadow Constructs Only)

DESCRIPTION:

BASIC SHADOW COST (from Shadow Worksheet): ____ Points

Times Quantity Multiplier:

UNIQUE ☐ *1 Point

NAMED & NUMBERED ☐ *2 Points

COUNTLESS ☐ *3 Points

Construct Shadow Point Cost

BASIC MANIFESTATION COST (from Artifact & Creature Worksheet): ____ Points

Times Connection Multiplier:

INNATE ☐ *1 Point

CONDUIT ☐ *2 Points

FLUX-PIN ☐ *3 Points

Construct Manifestation Point Cost

BASIC CONSTRUCT PSYCHE COST (select from below): ____ Points

NONE ☐ Zero Cost

SENSITIVE ☐ 1 Point

POWER-BASED ☐ 2 Points

Total Construct Point Cost

Shadow Knight Artifact & Creature Worksheet

Character Name

Item Name & Description

QUALITIES

Vitality

- ☐ 1 Point - Animal Vitality
- ☐ 2 Points - Chaos Vitality
- ☐ 4 Points - Amber Vitality

Movement

- ☐ 1 Point - Confers Mobility
- ☐ 2 Points - Double Speed
- ☐ 4 Points - Engine Speed

Stamina

- ☐ 1 Point - Double Stamina
- ☐ 2 Points - Amber Stamina
- ☐ 4 Points - Endless Stamina

Aggression

- ☐ 1 Point - Combat Training
- ☐ 2 Points - Combat Reflexes
- ☐ 4 Points - Combat Mastery

Armor

- ☐ 1 Point - Versus Weapons
- ☐ 2 Points - Versus Guns
- ☐ 4 Points - Invulnerable

Damage

- ☐ 1 Point - Extra Hard
- ☐ 2 Points - Doubling Damage
- ☐ 4 Points - Deadly Damage

Intelligence/Communication

- ☐ 1 Point - Able to Speak
- ☐ 2 Points - Speak & Sing
- ☐ 4 Points - Tongues

Psychic Sensitivity

- ☐ 1 Point - Sensitivity
- ☐ 2 Points - Danger Sense
- ☐ 4 Points - Extraordinary

Psychic Resistance

- ☐ 1 Point - Chaos Resistance
- ☐ 2 Points - Psychic Neutral
- ☐ 4 Points - Psychic Barrier

Total Point Cost

POWERS

Shadow Movement

- ☐ 1 Point - Follow Shadow Trail
- ☐ 2 Points - Follow Shadow Path
- ☐ 4 Points - Seek in Shadow

Shadow Manipulation

- ☐ 1 Point - "Mold" Shadow Stuff
- ☐ 2 Points - "Mold" Shadow Folk
- ☐ 4 Points - "Mold" Reality

Item Healing

- ☐ 1 Point - Self-Healing
- ☐ 2 Points - Rapid Healing
- ☐ 4 Points - Regeneration

Item Shape Shifting

- ☐ 1 Point - Alternate Form
- ☐ 2 Points - Named & Numbered
- ☐ 4 Points - Limited Shape Shift

TRANSFERAL

- ☐ 5 Points per Quality
- ☐ 10 Points per Power

IMPLANT

- ☐ 10 Points per Quality
- ☐ 15 Points per Power

QUANTITY MULTIPLIERS

- ☐ Unique (*1)
- ☐ Named & Numbered (*2)
- ☐ Horde (*3)
- ☐ Shadow Wide (*4)
- ☐ Environmental (*5)
- ☐ Ubiquitous (*6)

TRUMP POWERS

- ☐ 1 Point - Contains Trump Image
- ☐ 2 Points - Trump Deck
- ☐ 4 Points - Trump Powered

MAGIC POWER

- ☐ 1 Point - Rack a Spell
- ☐ 2 Points - Named & Numbered
- ☐ 4 Points - Rack & Use Spells

Shadow Knight Character Sheet

Character Name

Player Name:

Phone:

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

HEIGHT:

WEIGHT:

BUILD:

HAIR:

EYES:

DESCRIPTION:

CLOTHING COLORS/STYLE:

PERSONAL SYMBOL (OPTIONAL):

ATTRIBUTES

PSYCHE:	<input type="checkbox"/> Ranked Rank: ____ [____ Points]	<input type="checkbox"/> Amber	<input type="checkbox"/> Chaos	<input type="checkbox"/> Human
STRENGTH:	<input type="checkbox"/> Ranked Rank: ____ [____ Points]	<input type="checkbox"/> Amber	<input type="checkbox"/> Chaos	<input type="checkbox"/> Human
ENDURANCE:	<input type="checkbox"/> Ranked Rank: ____ [____ Points]	<input type="checkbox"/> Amber	<input type="checkbox"/> Chaos	<input type="checkbox"/> Human
WARFARE:	<input type="checkbox"/> Ranked Rank: ____ [____ Points]	<input type="checkbox"/> Amber	<input type="checkbox"/> Chaos	<input type="checkbox"/> Human

POWERS

BROKEN PATTERN IMPRINT ☐ 10 Points

PATTERN IMPRINT ☐ 50 Points

LOGRUS MASTERY ☐ 45 Points

TRUMP ARTISTRY ☐ 40 Points

SHAPE SHIFTING ☐ 35 Points

POWER WORDS ☐ 10 Points

CONJURATION ☐ 20 Points

ADEPT OF BROKEN PATTERN ☐ 25 Points

ADVANCED PATTERN IMPRINT ☐ 75 Points

ADVANCED LOGRUS MASTERY ☐ 70 Points

ADVANCED TRUMP ARTISTRY ☐ 60 Points

ADVANCED SHAPE SHIFTING ☐ 65 Points

SORCERY ☐ 15 Points

HIGH COMPELLING ☐ 25 Points

ARTIFACTS & CREATURES

from Artifact & Creature Worksheet: ____ Points

PERSONAL SHADOWS

from Shadow Worksheet: ____ Points

CONSTRUCTS

Total Points, based on Construct Worksheet: ____ Points

ALLIES

☐ Ally in Amber. 1 point @

☐ Demon Friends. 1 Points @

☐ Court Friend. 2 points @

☐ House Support. 3 points @

☐ Chaos Devotee. 4 points @

☐ Amber Devotee. 6 points @

PLAYER CONTRIBUTION

☐ 10 Point Diary. ☐ 10 Point Trump. ☐ 10 Point Game Log. ☐ Other [____ Points]

☐ **GOOD STUFF:** [____ Points] ☐ **ZERO STUFF** ☐ **BAD STUFF:** [+ ____ Points]

AMBER DICELESS ROLE-PLAYING Shadow Knight

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